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well written - gripping
story of a sacrificial service

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of a fact finding commission!

BEHIND MUD WALLS

BEHIND MUD WALLS

By
CHARLOTTE VIALL WISER
and
WILLIAM H. WISER
MAINPURI, INDIA

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To our Two Small Sons

and Their Village Comrades

through the din of whose play and

through the fire of whose questions

most of this book has

been written

PREFACE

When we came to Karimpur five years ago, to make a Survey of the social, religious and economic life of a fairly typical North India village, we were bent upon gathering facts by the most direct methods possible. But our new neighbours were not prepared for anything so rapid or impersonal. They refused to help us by any route other than the leisurely one of friendship. The result was that we became involved in numerous neighbourly activities which often led us out of sight of our Survey, but which we could not conscientiously refuse. We had learned from our neighbours that the road of friendship and service is more courteous and just; if not the most efficient. Those who expected a routine Survey—as we did when we started out—gave us up long ago, as hopelessly enchanted. But we promise to shake ourselves free some day and produce the information collected with the help of our village friends, in a document which we think will be of value as source material.

hopefully

Many of our experiences along the way have been too personal to have a place in a Survey. And yet they are too revealing to be discarded. We have set some of them down in this volume for the friends, both Indian and foreign, who have asked us repeatedly to share our village experiences with them. This informal presentation may be more interesting, and perhaps more helpful than the detailed information of a Survey. We have limited ourselves to those experiences which helped us most to understand our village neighbours,—and those which were most challenging. We have included the latter that they might in turn challenge the young men and women, many of whom we know, who because of special training and gifts, or because their fathers own villages, are peculiarly fitted to serve village folk, if they choose. As in other countries, interest in rural problems is growing rapidly in India. Since our coming to Karimpur, a number of Training Schools and Institutes for prospective rural workers have sprung up; and there have been an increasing number of speeches and articles on the needs, the conditions and the handicaps of the peasant. We want to use whatever influence and knowledge we have, to encourage a healthy growth of interest, based on careful study rather than on sentiment.

A mistake which most of us have made when we have gone straight from our town environment to the village, is that we have expected villagers to react like college graduates or sophisticated town dwellers. And we have criticized them when they have fallen short of our expectations,—while the fault lay with us. Gradually we have learned what others before us have learned, that the ordinary village farmer is the victim of circumstances, not the master. His life is pervaded and pressed down by his fears of the forces which control him. And before we can do much to help him, we must consider the source, the power,

Ignorance
weakness
custom
fear

the utility or harmfulness, of these forces. The maladjustments which many of us have caused in the past, when we were sincerely trying to help, have been due to our consideration of the villager as a free individual, and our oversight of the circumstances which dominate his life.

Although this book is much more personal than our Survey, still we have striven to keep it impartial. friendly We have written nothing that we would hesitate to write about our own community or our own family. When one of us has been tempted to wax romantic, or condemnatory, the other has followed after with a firm blue pencil and has cut down effusions to prosaic facts. We realize that conditions vary greatly in living, as in language or diet or architecture, in different parts of the country, and sometimes in different areas of the same Province. All that we can say is that we know these things to be true of our village. Friends in nearby sections of this Province have said that some of our experiences are so much like theirs that they might be their own; whereas a friend from Madras remarked that if he did not know us so well he might doubt our veracity! Whether the material herein presented be of interest because of its contrast, or its similarity, or its newness, we hope that it will be provocative of further observation and thought and service.

We have to acknowledge our thanks to the friends and relatives who have made our prolonged stay in the village possible. We are grateful to our Mission for being so long-suffering while we made no apparent progress. We also wish to thank the friends who have criticized this material and helped make it more readable. And we express our gratitude to our village neighbours who have been hospitable, generous and sympathetic, even in times when we have been most trying.

CHARLOTTE VIALL WISER
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American Presbyterian Mission,
Mainpuri, U. P. India.
May 15, 1930.

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CHAPTER I

FRIEND OR FOE?

WE SAT on the running board of our motor, and contemplated the village across the road. We had chosen Karimpur as being reasonably typical of the villages in our section of the United Provinces. We had secured credentials from higher quarters, and had been officially introduced to the Patwari, the village Accountant in the employ of Government. We had found an old mango grove; and therein had set up tents for our helpers, ourselves, and our two small sons. And now we were ready to study the village. But would the village permit itself to be studied? Certainly it gave no sign of welcome.

Simple [illegible]
ref our
experience
Camp p.

The irregular line of high, rain-furroughed, mud walls which faced us might have been mistaken for a deserted fortress. No dooryards, no windows were there to give glimpses of family life. Nothing but blank walls and more walls, so joined that it was often difficult to tell where one man's house ended and his neighbour's began. Dark doorways, patted into shape by hand, were the chief indications of separate dwellings. Directly opposite the entrance to our grove was a gateway, once imposing, now about to collapse. And behind it were more blank walls. The only other breaks in the weather beaten barrier

[illegible]

pool

were narrow lanes leading back into the village. These too were bordered by walls. A welcome variation in the picture was the tank which separated half of our grove from the village. It had been dug to furnish mud for walls and was now filled with water from the recent rains. On it two white geese drifted, making trails through the green scum. And at one side a small semi-circle of clear water intimated that here the washerman beat the village clothes. Beyond the far end of the tank we could see carpenters at work in a lane. A few extraordinarily thin cows wandered in from the fields and disappeared through the dark doorways, or down the narrow lanes. After some time a woman emerged from one of the doorways, a water jar on her head and another on her hip. She slunk close to the wall and hurried around a corner as though afraid of attracting our attention. We wished we could take upon ourselves the guise of lean cows. How else were we to pass the barriers? It began to rain, a cold, autumn rain. We retired to the dining tent for a conference on methods of approach.

Our clerk brought in the news that after observing our camp, and considering the various rumours that had arrived in advance, the leaders of the village had concluded that the Sahib must be the Settlement Officer come to check land holdings and revise rents. They knew that he was not the District Magistrate nor a Deputy, neither was he a police official. There had been missionaries here before, and he might be classified as such. But he had secured land maps of the area and had access to records of land-holdings. And who would want these but someone interested in taxes. Our clerk had tried to assure them that we were here on a helpful mission. But rumour was against him. They would watch and learn for themselves. They were running no risks with unlabelled strangers.

Less sophisticated members of the community, especially the women, were more than suspicious. They were terrified, lest we approach them or their animals or their children. It was obvious that no one was pining for our acquaintance. And yet our work depended on the cooperation of these, our new neighbours. We had to win their confidence and friendship, or roll up our tents and move on.

of friends
and trust

Early the next morning, a tall figure carrying a closely wrapped bundle appeared from the corner of the village where outcastes lived, and ventured across the muddy road. He was a Christian. He had heard somewhere that we were missionaries, and he knew from experience that missionary visitors in tents were not to be feared. He brought his baby, suffering from dysentery, for treatment. We had a medical kit for family emergencies and from this we gave him medicine for the baby, along with a bit of home-made advice on feeding. As he recrossed the road, neighbours peered from several doorways, waiting to see him or his child collapse—as they have laughingly confessed to us since.

When this our first caller had departed, the Sahib made his first trip into the village. He had chosen the least personal item on our list—the testing of the water of the then eighteen village wells. He followed the line of walls which faced our camp until he reached the first well. He might not have recognized it as a well had not a woman been stooping over it, drawing up a clay jar filled to the brim with water. There was no curb to protect the well or to save children from falling in. And yet well accidents are rare. As the woman raised her carefuly covered head and spied the Sahib, she snatched her water jar and her baby, and escaped. Across the narrow lane from the well a goldsmith sat on his mud verandah blowing through a long brass tube into the embers of his miniature clay furnace. He puffed on as though unaware of the presence of a stranger. Beyond the well a group of carpenters were working in the lane fitting spokes into the solid hub of a cart wheel. They "salaamed" dutifully, and one of them offered to draw water for the sample bottle. If the Sahib had let a jar down into the well himself, he would have polluted its water. They were obviously worried by his visit, and relieved when he moved on.

The second well, still further down this outer lane, was reserved for Brahmans. All around it Brahman farmers were chopping fodder and feeding their animals in the leisure of a rainy morning when fields do not demand watering. Here too there was no gesture of welcome beyond perfunctory salaams. Polite monosyllables were apparently the limit of their vocabulary. Their welcome was very unlike the cordiality to which we were accustomed among In-

Neighbour women congregated on the roof

The Mission doctor in our dispensary tent

dian friends in Mainpuri. Even the dogs yapped and the donkeys escaped as fast as their hobbles would allow.

The search for other wells led the Sahib down twisting narrow lanes through the heart of the village. More walls, broken only by irregular doorways, lined these lanes. An occasional high, gaily decorated gateway topped with protecting grass eaves and bordered by smoothed walls, declared the coming of prosperity to some household. But most of the walls were sadly corroded. Where families had dwindled to numbers too small to maintain earlier pretensions, sections of outer walls were allowed to crumble. And where families had died out, the Sahib looked through gaping doorways at rough mounds of earth where guarded courtyards once had been. In other sections, particularly down what we later called "Humble Lane," walls were more neighbourly, and women visited in the lane while their children made mud carts. All vanished at sight of the stranger. Thus the Sahib went the round of the wells—the shepherds' well, the wells used by farmer castes, the Mohammedans' well, the wells reserved for craftsmen, and those for serving castes, the leather workers' well, and the wells of other outcaste groups. While waiting for someone of proper caste to produce a jar with which to draw water for his sample bottles, the Sahib explained to the men who salaamed him that he was interested in studying the village water supply and that he hoped to supplement any deficiencies which might be the cause of ill-health.

Everywhere his explanations were greeted with non committal monosyllables. His bottles were filled with well water for testing, but the experiment had failed as a friendly overture.

From the Patwari, we secured the names of the four men who could help us most, if they chose. The Sahib called on these and was greeted with hospitable offers of milk, fuel, and even beds. But to his intimations of a Social Survey, there was a guarded response. We had not before realized how difficult it would be to explain the purpose of a Study to a practical villager. The same difficulty has since arisen in trying to explain political events. After hearing an explanation of Dominion Status, the villager asks, "How will it benefit me? Will it give me full ownership of my fields? Will I get consolidated holdings? Will I get canal water? Will we get a decent road through the village? Will some of us get jobs?" Such questions challenge one's theories. And they must be answered honestly before one can win the questioner's support. Our introduction from District officials could secure for us every physical comfort, but not the co-operation we desired. Experience has taught the villager to conceal his wealth and to avoid any revelation of his true status, lest it be used later to his disadvantage. A direct question at once rouses his suspicion. And without his confidence we could only hope for distortions of the truth.

expect

We set for ourselves the task of turning opposition into confidence, and fear into friendship. We had not known it, but the Christian father with his child was our first step. His baby did not die, as anticipated by neighbours, but improved. On the following morning we found three daring fathers with ailing children at our tent door. On the following day there were ten, then twenty, then fifty. Half of the office tent was transformed into a dispensary. The previous summer in the hills, the Memsahiba had heard a lecture on medical helps for those working in villages. The notes from this lecture were brought out and used until the pages were in tatters. Our medical supplies were rapidly exhausted and had to be replenished by frequent trips to town. We acquired another tent to be used as a dispensary, and established one clerk in it with instructions for simple treatments, while we occasionally withdrew to the office tent for study. At times, the Survey threatened to be swamped by prolonged hours of amateur medical service. But these hours served our purpose, as few activities could have done. Fathers, and the few mothers who dared come, became communicative, voluble. Opportunities for questioning rapidly increased, although weariness, and pity for unnecessary suffering often blotted out our desire to seek information. First Aid and Home Nursing had not appeared in our Survey schedule, or budget. But they proved our greatest asset—and expense. And they will remain necessary items in any effort at village service, until village folk learn to protect themselves from the preventable diseases which now travel freely from town to town and house to house.

with Christ
method

The District Medical Officer, at first amused, later keenly interested, drove out to our camp on Sunday mornings for special cases. On one visit he removed a disfiguring tumor from the side of a small girl's nose. Her parents refused to send her to the hospital and yet they begged us to help her. We turned our baby's playpen on its side under a mango tree and used it as an operating table. The doctor's assistant gave the anaesthetic and the Memsahiba acted as nurse. Petrol was the antiseptic wash, and tire-mending solution was painted over the wound afterwards. The operation was successful, and has become one of the village traditions. In our second year the Medical Officer was unable to continue his services. But he had visited us often enough to disprove many of the rumours of hospital terrors. Since then one of our Mission doctors has made fortnightly visits—at great personal inconvenience—first from Kasganj and now from Fatehgarh, each about forty-five miles away.

nor a
large
hospital

After our first test case the dispensary continued to draw our neighbours to us. But they were still unwilling to have us come to them, inside their homes. Someone had to be desperate to risk this, and the desperate one was a Brahman tortured by maggots up his nose. A fortnight after our arrival a youth came with the request that the Memsahiba come to see his father. As she followed him through the village she realized that she had much to do to win friends. Children running gaily out of doorways shrieked and disappeared. The women who peeped

not wanting
them
should
come
inside
rooms

out did not smile in welcome. She was invited to enter a doorway higher and wider than most doorways in the village. It was set in an entrance whitewashed into startling contrast to the crumbling mud walls which flanked it. On either side of the doorway was a vertical row of niches painted a vivid blue; and above it, broken bits of mirror plastered into the mud were glittering in the sunshine. Inside, she was led across a long narrow room with emptied clay troughs ranged along one side. The earth floor was littered with dung not yet gathered up by the women of the family. Beyond this room she entered a large courtyard deserted save for stacks of fodder and neat mounds of dung cakes. The walls had not been built up nor mud plastered for many seasons. The Memsahiba learned later that few families could boast this extra courtyard for the animals. It was evidence of the high position once held by this household, but now transferred to more thrifty neighbours. Beyond this courtyard in a long narrow room like the one first entered, she found the patient on a rope-strung cot. Close beside him a calf was tied. He had been ill for weeks and had not been moved during that time. Neither had the quilts which served him as bedding been changed. He was buried under a thick quilt with not a hair nor a toe exposed. Thus he escaped the flies and wasps which swarmed about him. When he pushed back his covering the stench was nauseating. His son and his brother fled. The much worn lecture notes supplied instructions for treatment, and with their help and a pair of tweezers

cattle

X manger

the Memsahiba attacked the maggots. As one after another was drawn out the men returned, fascinated, and three women came slowly from the inner family courtyard with their noses carefully covered. The Memsahiba asked the brother of the patient to fan away the flies while she worked. He shouted the order to someone else. The fan appeared as she was about to depart. Several visits with tweezers and a strong prescription, disposed of the maggots. The Brahman was exceedingly grateful both for relief from the maggots and for the prescribed change of clothes and bedding. He was dying from syphilis, and the maggots had been an added torment. When we learned later that his body was being burned, we expected to hear that the Memsahiba had caused his death by her inauspicious presence. But not even his son intimated this. It had been his fate to die, and maggots and Memsahibas were irrelevant.

The story of the maggots spread. The faces which looked out from the shadows as the Memsahiba passed were less hostile. When daily visits to the house of the sick Brahman were almost over, there came a smothered call of "Memsahiba" from a doorway. She responded gladly. Inside the family courtyard, behind the long narrow stable-room she found a group of women hovering over a wailing baby. She did her best to help. On her second call in this home the women were sufficiently relieved of worry over the child to turn their attention to her. And the questions began—shy but direct. How many sons had she? Did she nurse her own babies or turn them

Surgery
—
[illegible]
[illegible]

over to a wet nurse as they had heard? Did she prepare the Sahib's food with her own hands? Neighbour women congregated on the roof of the storeroom at the side of the courtyard. One or two descended by the courtyard ladder to join the questioners. Every question had to be repeated and every answer gone over many times in many forms before comprehension dawned. One neighbour appointed herself interpreter, announcing that she had once talked with a foreign woman and could understand the Memsahiba's English—and the Memsahiba had been using her most grammatical Hindustani. Someone called down from the roof inviting the Memsahiba next door. Next door the same questions were gone over, with more added. On the following day there was a further invitation with calls to neighbours still further on. The Medical Officer's impromptu operation was made on the daughter of the headman of the village. This gave the Memsahiba an invitation to his home. And when once accepted there, she was accepted by the village. Sometimes she was called to see ill mothers or babies. Often it was curiosity merging into a desire for friendship which prompted the women to send for her. Questions became increasingly personal until there was little left to excite curiosity. Mutual adjustments in vocabulary and pronunciation made conversation more natural. And the strain of unfamiliarity gradually relaxed until here, behind uninviting mud walls, the Memsahiba found herself amongst lovable friends, friends who were ready to ask her help in time of need and who in turn were ready to help her to understand their ways and their lives. A notebook and pencil would have alarmed them into speechlessness. Any information to be recorded had to wait until she returned to camp.

In those early days we made a rule for ourselves never to enter a house until some member of the household first invited us to come in. The hospitality with which we have consistently been met has rewarded us for keeping this rule at times when our desire to see and hear, tempted us to intrude. Holding to it during our five years in the village, we now go freely and naturally into any but two or three homes, the Sahib stopping at the men's quarters and the Memsahiba going in amongst the women. By continually demonstrating our desire to be neighbours we finally made it clear that there was only goodwill in our camp. We might be foolish in our questionings, but not malicious. As good neighbours we were accessible at any time to those in need. When two men once came to ask our help at midnight, our helpers tried to send them away. Their reply was comforting—"We know that if the Sahib hears our voices, he will not turn us away."

same
with
Christ

Peace &
Goodwill
among
men

x

We shared the motor in season and out of season. Whenever we passed any of our neighbours trudging to or from Mainpuri we offered them a lift. At first some of the older men were reluctant. But now the slowing of the motor engine is a signal for any Karimpurite to start running down the road and climb in, or perch on the running board if there is no more room inside. When we return to the car after it has been standing outside our Mainpuri bungalow, or a bazaar shop, we are never surprised to find village friends waiting patiently beside it. They take for granted that we will have room for them somewhere, for the drive home. During the first year whenever the motor stirred, village youngsters came flying. They swarmed over every available bit of step and mud guard, shouting and singing, and holding on tight while we carried them to the first mile post. Now that the motor is a part of everyday village life, the rides to the mile post only occur when a crowd of youngsters happen to be on hand looking for something to do. They, like the grown-ups, take for granted that the ride is theirs for the asking. When eighteen small boys and girls board an already loaded car, the occasion is hilarious—for all but the driver.

Just as we shared the motor, our small sons shared their carts and tricycle, and the games which could be played in the sunshine. We depended on the sun and profuse use of disinfectants to save us all from small-pox, and the boys from ring-worm and other skin infections accepted as inevitable in the village. The article which we shared most gladly, was soap. We were relieved to find that caste rules forbade the sharing of our food. At least here was a limit set for us without any breach of neighbourliness.

One night when the village singers accompanied by the village band, were energetically entertaining themselves, the Sahib got out his violin. It had always been popular amongst city friends and might be equally so here. When he offered to join the band he was accepted politely, but reluctantly. However, when they realized that there was no trick in his offer and no intention of laughing at their music, they welcomed him with enthusiasm. The band was composed of an old hand bellows harmonium, manipulated by one of the goldsmiths, a *dholak* (a small barrel-shaped drum which is struck sharply and rhythmically with the fingers at one end and the palm of the hand at the other), a pair of long iron tongs fitted with a ring of iron to be jangled, and a pair of castanets two inches in diameter. A violin was a welcome addition especially when the player could carry any of their tunes. Thereafter, when special guests were to be entertained, the Sahib was called over to the village to assist. On such occasions, players and audience were packed close together on the floor of the goldsmith's workshop, or on the headman's verandah. And the performance lasted until the singers, usually one of the village elders and his satellites, had exhausted their repertoire and voices. Due to his success with the violin, the Sahib was invited to join wedding parties going from the homes of our leaders to other villages. He travelled, slept, and ate with the bridegroom and his relatives and left them with nothing to suspect or fear.

For the sake of those who still persisted in associating us with the evil eye, we tried to keep nothing hidden. In camp this is easily accomplished. Our cooking has always been done in the open where any passerby might stop and observe. Our boys' baths are open to inspection at any time. And when youngsters peer into the dining tent at meal times, we do not drive them away. Their own home training usually sends them scampering from the food of another. And if some child has no such scruples, there are sure to be others present to remind him. They have watched us wash dishes, and have marvelled at our loaves of bread and cakes. Even oranges, grown a few miles away, are regarded as curiosities. Our sleeping room is our retreat, when curtains are drawn. But even its contents are familiar to the boys and girls. There is nothing concealed and therefore nothing to fear. Our office with its typewriter is as lasting a mystery as any. Here we often let the children come, and any grown-up is free to enter, and stand over us or squat comfortably beside the desk. The flaps are seldom down. A friend accustomed to locked doors in a large city once visited our camp. After two days of unexclusive living, she exclaimed, "I don't see how you stand having them on top of you, all of the time. I'd go wild."

When we first pitched our camp beside the village we took for granted that we would study village life disinterestedly and move on. But something far different has happened. The villagers refuse to believe that we might move on, and press us to build a bungalow to establish our permanence. And we have lost the disinterested attitude to such an extent that we cannot plan our own future, apart from the village. When we came back for our second camping season, missionary friends warned us that the village folk would very likely resent our return. Curiosity was gone, and our welcome would probably go with it. Our experience has been to the contrary. Each year has bound us closer to the life of the community. Some of our neighbours have grasped the idea of our Survey and are willing to co-operate in its preparation. Others have accepted us simply as friends. They urge us to stay and take our place amongst them. Their difficulty is in finding the place. Every member of village society has his special function, and the maintenance of the group depends on the proper functioning of each member. No one can be carried along who does not contribute. And what is our particular contribution? They have tried to make it medical service, and this is satisfactory as long as cases are simple. But when there is serious trouble we call in, or go to, a doctor. Some of our staunchest friends among the village elders have expressed their annoyance at our limitations. We have a dispensary. Then why run off to someone else when we could function best? They have finally accepted our service as a form of village "last resort," or emergency bureau. They know that when the village prescriber can do nothing more for a sick child, or a spirit controller fails to cure a buffalo, they can fall back on us to secure the proper help. If the police watchman goes too far in his oppressions, the Sahib will speak for them. If there is some difficulty with records, the Sahib will consult the proper authority. We may study if we choose, but these other irregular services are our real share in the common burden. And they justify our retaining a place in the village régime.

In our district a man does not speak of his wife as "my wife," or "Mrs. Ram Lal," but as "mere ghar ki" (of my house). In the same way he may refer to other members of his immediate family or to anything belonging to his household as "of my house," or simply "of the house." And our village friends now speak of us as "the Sahib and Memsahiba of our house," "the small sons of our house" and even, "the motor of the house," thereby drawing us into their village family. Once upon a time we were regarded as foes. Now our appearance in a village lane neither rouses hostility nor excites curiosity. We are simply members of the village family performing our tasks, even as the carpenter and the farmer perform theirs.

He came unto his own and
his own received him not
To as many as received him

CHAPTER II

THE LEADERS

The leaders of our village are so sure of their power that they make no effort to display it. The casual visitor finds little to distinguish them from other farmers. They dress as simply and cheaply as their neighbours, and do no more shouting or scolding. They work as faithfully as any, in their fields. The walls enclosing their family courtyards may be high, but are no better kept than those adjoining them, and their entrances are often less elaborate. And yet when one of them appears among men of serving caste, the latter express respect and fear in every guarded word and gesture. The serving ones have learned that as long as their subservience is unquestioned, the hand which directs them rests lightly. But let there be any move toward independence or even indifference among them, and the paternal touch becomes a strangle-hold.

Rights and privileges which would be in the hands of the landlord, were he to reside in the village, are retained by the small group of leaders. The ordinary villager looks to them for advances for his animals and implements. He waters his fields from their wells. The waterways to his fields must pass through their land. His animals graze on areas under their control. He borrows their bullocks in times of need. He has the privilege of collecting fuel from their land. Wood for house and implement repairs, and even the wood for burning his dead, must be begged from one of them. Money for weddings is borrowed from them. Employment in slack times for some, and full time employment for others is supplied by them. Women of the serving classes find part time work in their homes. Carpenters, potters, cotton carders, and other servers of all castes, are their low caste dependents since it is through the village leaders that they obtain work. On each festival day, representatives from dependent families visit the homes of leaders who patronize them, and receive cakes and sweets from the women folk. Thus, in every detail of life have the leaders bound the village to themselves. Their favour may bring about a man's prosperity and their disfavour may cause him to fail, or may make life so unbearable for him that he will leave the village.

In our village the economic power of the leaders is strengthened by their religious and social influence, as Brahmans. The right of Brahmans to dictate may be challenged in the cities, but in villages like ours their control is absolute. Their birth as Brahmans is evidence of their superiority. Many an important decision in a humble section of the village waits on their divinely guided sanction. Although they occupy themselves as farmers and grain lenders, two or three of them are called upon to officiate as priests in ceremonies of grave importance to villagers. As with their economic power, they find it unnecessary to proclaim their authority as Brahmans. But if anyone fails to recognize the existence of this authority, he is reminded of it so effectively that he does not err again.

We had been in the village almost a year before we observed our leaders in action. Three miles across the fields from us there is a small hamlet. Its head man is a grain lender of wealth, but of lower caste standing than the Brahman leaders of our village. Several years ago he built a small temple in the fields about two miles out of our village. The building of the temple was an act of religious merit. And to add to the merit, he holds an annual fair in the grove beside the temple, thus making sure that its patron deity is worshipped at least once a year. This fair has become quite an event in the hot season calendar of our village and the hamlets round about. On the day appointed women and children, and a few men, leave their offerings of marigolds or pice before the painted god just inside the temple door, and buy and sell in the grove without. At dusk most of the women and children go home, and the men folk after completing their evening chores, walk out to the temple and gather in the theatre set up in a field beside the grove. A small tent serves as dressing room for the actors, and a canopy marks the theatre. Under it a large sheet is spread on the ground for the audience, and near the center there is an uncurtained platform on which the drama is staged. One night in June we sat in our motor, in

The Panchayat settles a quarrel

Music with a wedding party

the dark coolness outside the canopy, watching the performance. Parts of the Ramayana were being recited and acted by a travelling troupe. There were signs of uneasiness in the section where two of our Karimpur leaders, Brahmans, sat. The restlessness increased until it was difficult to see or hear what was going on, on the platform. Someone came and spoke excitedly to our host, the builder of the temple, who was standing beside the motor. He became agitated. The confusion grew until the players were drowned out. Shortly, our Karimpur leaders rose and departed. And every man and boy from our village followed them out. With the exit of three-fourths of the audience, the performance went flat. We soon slipped away, and gave some of our Karimpur neighbours a lift while they explained. The host at the fair was of lower caste than our Karimpur leaders. His nephew chose to exhibit himself in his importance and finery by sitting on the edge of the platform. By so doing he deliberately committed a caste outrage. The Brahman leaders, not he, should have had the higher seat. When his uncle had been warned, and was unable to move him, the insulted leaders gave the signal, and walked out, knowing that their Karimpur delegation would follow. A drama is a rare treat to the men of our village. And yet they left it without question. They had hurried through their work and walked out to the temple for a night's diversion. And here they were walking home again. They expressed no resentment toward the leaders whose offended honour obliged them to miss the drama. Their complaints were against the youth who had precipitated the trouble. Needless to say this erring nephew was absent from the dramatic performance the following summer.

What happened to the host and his nephew at the Fair might happen to any of us if we should antagonize the leaders, deliberately or unwittingly. We ourselves had an initiation which made us realize how they could handicap us, if they chose. On our first Christmas in Karimpur we had a big party for the village children, with stories, games, and small gifts. At the close, there was a monkeynut scramble which caused much hilarity. Nothing was said against the party, and our friendly relations with the village continued. By the time the following Christmas came we knew the children and their interests better so had a program carefully planned. The hour for the party came—and passed. Another hour. Two. Village folk are very casual in their regard for time. But when small boys are more than two hours late at a party something is wrong. We finally sent our clerk over to the house of the head man. There he found several leaders together, with crowds of boys sitting in the lanes around them. No sign of impatience abroad. He asked the eldest leader why the boys were kept at home. The leader explained that caste boys of the village could not accept monkeynuts which the Sahib or any of his outcaste servants might have touched. And the simplest way of refusing the nuts was to stay at home. No fuss, no protest, but quiet non-cooperation. Our first inclination was to give up the Christmas party. But the youngsters were patiently waiting across the road, while fun and gifts waited with us. We sent word, "No monkeynuts," and the children came thronging. Our Christian neighbours, outcastes, had a feast of monkeynuts that Christmas and so had we. And since then we have been spared the added expense of a scramble. The whole affair was a trifle, but it served as a warning. If we want to help the humble we must do it with the good-will of their present leaders. If we antagonize them, they may do us personally no harm, but they can hurt those whom we are trying to help—just as they kept the children from our Christmas festival.

A later incident in Karimpur revealed the absoluteness of the power of leaders such as ours, who combine in themselves the rights of high birth and economic power. The trouble started on a warm moonlight night in harvest season. Farmers were lying on their partly threshed mounds of grain in a grove, swapping stories before they slept. A Kachhi (one of the lower castes) was asked to tell the version of the birth of Rawan, which he had once heard. He told of a Brahman who was married by an evil goddess to a girl of washerman caste (an outcaste group). The Brahman husband tried to destroy her, but after her rescue, and many adventures, he was remarried to her without recognizing her. They had one son. Some years later, the Brahman went off for ten years as a Sadhu. On his return, he approached his wife nine times. The tenth time he came to her as a donkey, and while he was in this guise, Rawan was conceived—the Rawan who stole Sita from Rama and carried her off to his home in Ceylon. The story with its repeated ridicule of a Brahman and its association of a Brahman with the hated Rawan, infuriated a Brahman farmer-priest lying on his grain pile nearby. The insult to his caste grew during the night, till it clamoured for revenge. In the morning he collected his Brahman friends and the band approached the Kachhis, armed with *lathis* (long poles with heavy tips). On their way they stopped at the house of the village head, also a Brahman, with the request that he accompany them. As far as caste and numbers were concerned, they needed no added strength. But he was the man from whom all of the Kachhis got their necessary advances of food and money. And the particular Kachhi who told the story was deeply in debt to him. The Brahmans asked him to refuse all future credit, in case the Kachhis failed to make a satisfactory settlement. If he withdrew his credit, the other influential men of the village would stand united and refuse theirs. Thus armed, the Brahman leaders went to the Kachhis assured of success. The latter had already helped the offender to escape. They made no effort to defend themselves against the crowd who threatened them. Instead they begged forgiveness, and agreed that when the story teller returned he should accept a beating from the insulted high caste neighbour. There was no choice for them between this and ruin.

If we were to limit our experiences to our own village, we should be tempted to interpret leadership as being synonymous with caste prestige. If caste precedence and economic power rest in the same men, their leadership is assured. If the two qualities are separate, villagers follow the man who can grant or withhold their daily bread. Ordinarily we find this power resting with the Twice-Born. But in one village which we recently visited, an Ahir (one of the serving castes) was influential enough to be made village head. A short time before our visit, he had been annoyed by the master of the village school, financed and directed by the District Board. This school was in the Brahman quarter of the village. The Ahir head man set up an independent school in a house which he owned, and attracted—or forced—fifty of the sixty pupils of the District Board School to it. No doubt he will eventually disband his personally financed school. But he has succeeded in spoiling the year's record and work of the District School Master, and hastened his transfer. Incidentally he has impressed the men of his village with his power to make or destroy.

He who would help any one group or all groups of the village, cannot afford to ignore the power of present leaders. If he sees little hope of securing justice or improved conditions through them, and has sufficient financial support, he can replace them. But he must make the substitution complete. By securing for himself the position of economic master, as he would in case he became the landlord or financing agent, he can transfer all rights and duties of leadership to himself. A missionary in Moradabad has done this with marked success. He has freed his people from the all-encompassing indebtedness to the old leaders by transferring their dependence at every point, to a cooperative society under his direct guidance. They still acknowledge a leader. They have been led so long that they would flounder if suddenly obliged to act on their own responsibility and make important decisions unguided. But their new leader is concerned with their welfare and the development of their independence, rather than their subordination. Though nominally a cooperative society, this method makes heavy demands upon the time and finances of the leader. And further, it involves the personal supervision of a number of highly qualified co-leaders. But it is the fairest and surest form of replacement.

Partial replacement is much more doubtful and may prove harmful to those whom it aims to help. Like leaders everywhere, village leaders are jealous of their power. If they find someone attempting to usurp their rights, without paying the price, their suspicions are naturally aroused. If they discover that a villager is being drawn away from them at any one point, they become antagonistic toward the agency which is drawing him, and eventually devise means of forcing him back. This accounts for the failure of many a cooperative credit society which has reached past the leaders and made up its membership from dissatisfied followers. A villager accepts financial help from such a society. He pays up his old debts to his leader, and promises to incur no new debts except to the society. But he must still turn to his old leader for many favours such as grazing ground for his animals, water for his fields, and perhaps employment for his sons. Then some urgent need for money arises, which he finds is beyond the scope of the society. He turns to the old leader, whose rules for loans are more flexible. He thinks that he can pay up, and still carry on as a member of the society. But the leader's grip has tightened and will not let him go. He is drawn back into the old order, and the service of the cooperative society has been made futile.

Where cooperative societies have been introduced with the support of established leaders, their chances of success have been much greater. Leaders who are approachable and who have had a chance to discover what cooperation can do for them and their followers together, have not only helped but in some cases have themselves developed the work of the societies. The rural reconstruction and the better living societies of Benares District which include a whole village in a group, have served well, with the support of existing leaders. These societies have not limited themselves to credit nor any one phase of agriculture but have fostered the development of the community as a whole, helping and strengthening, whether through adult education, better marketing, improved sanitation, or other service which may be performed cooperatively.

This or a similar method of cooperation which includes rather than replaces existing leaders is most desirable, if the leaders are willing to cooperate. By sharing with them what we have learned of community welfare, we can help them to a more altruistic application of their power. They cannot be expected to change from selfish motives to community interest immediately. But when once they do care for the well being, rather than the subservience of their dependents, they can do much more than we, as outsiders, can hope to do. We have seen this demonstrated by one of our leaders whose zeal for public service is outstanding.

The average farmer in our village listens with interest to an explanation of the advantages of a new variety of seed. But he would not risk trying it unless his leader had first tried it, or at least sanctioned it. He might be an enthusiastic observer of the demonstration of a Persian wheel used for drawing water, but he could not afford to buy one without a loan from his leader. And he would not think of asking for a loan until his leader had himself installed a wheel. He knows that if he should presume to supersede his leader in any detail, social or economic, he would be brought down forcibly to his proper station. It is his lot to wait for the signal to advance. Moreover, he has learned from experience that the cool judgment of his leader can save him from the mistakes into which his own gullibility is apt to plunge him. We can help these simple village folk most if we first win the confidence and approval of their leaders, even though in so doing we are obliged to grant advantages to the leaders which seem beyond their deserts.

The official revival of the authority of the village Panchayat is an acknowledgment of the power of the leaders. Panchayats have been adopted in several areas after other experiments in village service have been tried out. The Panchayat involves the maximum cooperation of the leaders. They come into it as representatives of the village, and while acting on the Panchayat they are expected to consider the order and well-being of the community rather than personal ambitions. The Magistrate of Muttra District recently wrote, "Personally I regard the Panchayat as the unit of our administration through which there is most hope of making progress in the rural area. I make a point therefore, of keeping in personal touch, so far as possible, with each village Panchayat, and I direct Deputies and Tahsildars to do the same."

arbitratio

In Karimpur there is as yet no Government recognized Panchayat according to the United Provinces Village Panchayat Act of 1920. But the leaders often confer as a self-appointed Panchayat. They try to settle boundary disputes or other quarrels which are not serious enough to warrant police interference or court expense. If invited to attend these meetings, the outsider with unselfish motives can do much to raise standards of justice. A man once complained of the judgment against him approved by a member of our Panchayat whom he felt should have supported him regardless of principle. The Panchayat member defended himself by saying, "What could I do with the Sahib sitting right there?" There is always the danger of powerful factions controlling the village Panchayat for evil, and our mistrust of certain leaders made us hesitate to press for Government recognition. One leader in particular had a record of abuse and extortion. He showed no consideration for the men whom chance brought under his control, but used them ruthlessly for the increase of his own wealth and power. Such a man would be a danger to the community if made an official representative of the village. However, when his name appeared amongst others as a member of the possible official Panchayat, disapproval came from all groups. Men who, we thought, would be afraid to murmur against him, opposed his appointment openly. Then it was that we made an interesting discovery. Those who had been wholly dependent upon him and had suffered from his oppression, were gradually and quietly transferring their allegiance to other leaders. The other leaders, welcoming any increase of their own power, encouraged the change at every possible point. The more he threatened, the more the others invited, until the only dependents left to him were men from hamlets outside the village boundaries. Almost imperceptibly a momentous change in village leadership had been effected by humble folk, without any stir or any pretence of independence. If we follow their honest choice we are pretty sure of finding the leaders who are most just.

The burden of village responsibility rests on the leaders just as family responsibility rests on the head of the house. The moment a villager finds himself harassed by a landlord seeking payment of rent arrears or by the police implicating him in a dacoity case, he comes to his leader, as a son to his father, expecting the necessary help financial or otherwise. And like a father, the leader intercedes and makes whatever settlement is demanded, on behalf of his dependent. It may demand days away from pressing field work, interviewing officials, and attending court. And it may involve the expenditure of a considerable number of rupees. But the leader gives and does all ungrudgingly as part of his responsibility. When we are tempted to criticize leaders, we should remind ourselves of the innumerable times when they have shouldered burdens which most of us would be tempted to throw back upon the man who incurred them.

When we first came to Karimpur a villager was a villager to us with no particular distinction between those who led and those who followed. In our efforts to make friends, we accepted any opportunity in any group. But when actual study began we found ourselves repeatedly brought back to one or another of the accepted leaders. We could not make progress without their cooperation, and they were not inclined to cooperate. They had much more to lose from interference or exposure than the ordinary villager. We had to convince them that we were here to observe impersonally and not to destroy their position, before they stirred. When they chose to be friendly they showed us their best, most lovable selves. And we learned what they could do if this side of them were to predominate over the jealous guarding of power.

The head of the village has been our willing counsellor and has come with equal readiness to ask our counsel. After the operation on his daughter's nose, his faith in us was established, and since then our friendship has been strengthened through work together. He has often asked the Sahib to criticize him if his treatment of others seemed at any time to be unworthy of a "follower of God." He lends money and grain, but his rates are not exorbitant. He keeps records of payments, and as yet we have not heard him accused of the unfairness ordinarily ascribed to his kind. He demands payment in full, but no more than a business man might in any community. His uprightness has made it easier for us to cooperate with him. But it has denied us the experience of encountering the selfish type of village head who is to be found in many places. His younger brother is sharper in his dealings and more conscious of importance. It was he who instigated the departure from the dramatic performance at the temple.

Next door to the village head, lives a man more deferred to, though neither trusted nor admired. He was hospitable toward us but made it evident that he did not care to make friends. We have since learned of his league with two others in a terrorizing campaign in the village. No doubt his fear of our intrusion in this, helped keep him aloof. We had been in the village several months when he sent word that he was ill unto death. There was nothing that we could do for him. As a last resort, he allowed himself to be taken to our Mission Hospital in Fatehgarh, because he would be on the banks of the Ganges if he should die there. Weeks of skilful treatment saved him and it was a great day in the village when we brought him home in the motor. His gratitude to the Mission doctor transformed his attitude toward us. There has been no wavering in his loyalty since, although he has had many dealings to conceal from us.

One leader who obviously avoided the altruistic way of dealing with his descendants and who took us and our study as a great joke, was won by the violin. In his youth he was the village clown and as yet has had no successor. He is present at every musical bout, and decides who shall sing and who shall not. At first, in his enthusiasm over the violin, he came to our camp at any hour (convenient or otherwise) announcing that he wanted to hear some music. When he found that the Sahib did not comply, he resigned himself to getting all he could on nights set aside for music. He still refuses to take our work seriously, but he laughs at us as friends and not as undesirable outsiders. And he makes no effort to interfere.

Another accepted leader expressed his friendliness by allowing his youngest son to work with us. He always invited us to his house for special functions and we found him a gracious, though reticent host. As in former cases, it was a serious illness which brought us closer to this leader and his family. The lovable old grey haired man became very ill with pneumonia. The Sahib nursed him constantly and brought the District Medical Officer out to see him, but all the effort was to no avail. We lost a friend whom we wished we might have known longer. At the cremation, which the Sahib attended, one of the elders was heard to say, "Others come and make profession of friendship, and go away. Our Sahib shares our happiness and our troubles, and does not desert us. He demonstrates his friendship." It is not difficult to work with men when this is their attitude toward us.

In cultivating the good-will of leaders and trying to develop their better qualities one is in constant danger of being monopolized by them. We who are interested in helping high and low alike dare not yield to their more lavish entertainment or flattery. The leader regards the rest of the village as existing for his convenience. And it is difficult for him to understand how an outsider can be as interested in a potter or a sweeper as in himself. When we pass the house of a leader, he is sure to ask "Whither bound?" If we say, "To the house of Tori, The Dhanuk (an outcaste)," he lifts his eyebrows and asks, "Why?" If it is a personal call he expresses his disapproval, sometimes with an air of suspicion. If we are going to visit the sick, he nods his head in understanding. This is part of our village function. If we were limited to the point of view of the leaders we would find little need for village reconstruction. Through them we serve the village, but through them we cannot know the village.

CHAPTER III

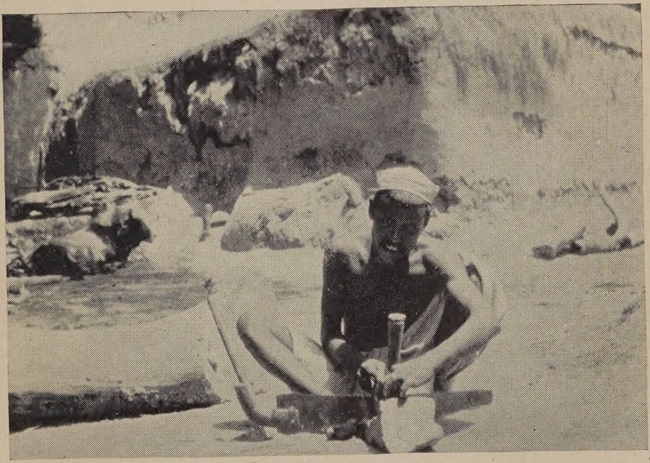
THOSE WHO FOLLOW

THERE are men whose standing according to caste is as high as that of the leaders. But they are content to go their own unobtrusive way, working their own land with one or two hired helpers, asking no favours and granting none. Their voices are seldom heard outside of their own fields or cattle rooms. When problems arise, each of them turns helplessly to the accepted leader most closely related to him, relying on his judgment and strength. And in return, when there is dissension in the village, each leader knows which of these men will follow him without question. We may not see these followers for months. But eventually a land dispute or illness brings one of them to us, usually with his chosen leader as spokesman. And for a period we are closely associated, consulting records and officials, or keeping watch beside a sick child. In these times of trial we have found them to be like hard-working, home-loving peasants anywhere, with the difference that in them is a distinct consciousness of high birth.

Between these Brahmans and the next group of farmers lie the two great divisions (Kshatriya and Vaisya) including many castes, pictured as the arms and body supporting the Brahman head. These divisions are represented by only a few families in Karimpur. Below them are the Sudras, the feet. Chief in number and importance amongst Sudras in our village are the Kachhis, farmers who work on land which they rent for their own use or which they rent on shares with Brahmans. They have been brought up, like their forefathers, with the assurance that their mission in life is to till the soil and to accept the will of their superiors. They live in a little colony of joint-family enclosures apart from the rest of the village. As soon as one of their boys can lift a head load of grain or drive a bullock, he is expected to help. And from then on, he carries his full share, until old age entitles him to partial rest. Severe illness may grant him a respite, but as soon as he can move, he must resume his duties. At the time of writing, one of the men has a badly damaged knee for which the doctor prescribes rest. His wife has fever, and her new baby is suffering from lack of nourishment. But they feel that they cannot slacken. Their added burden must not fall on other members of the joint family already working to the limit of endurance.

They have their own group leader who presents their difficulties to the men higher up. His friendship was won by the Mission doctor at Kasganj who removed cataracts from both his eyes. Since the restoring of his sight he has been one of our most loyal supporters. And his confidence has spread to the whole group. We have served in all of their homes in times of desperate need—they never com-

The potter making clay saucers for festival lamps



One of the carpenters at work in the lane

plain or ask help unless the need is desperate. And often they let sickness go unreported until a rainy day lightens field work and gives them time to think of their families. Our contacts with them have strengthened our respect for their tirelessness, and increased our desire to help them more constructively.

In addition to the Kachhis there are eleven castes in Karimpur counted as Sudras. None are as self sufficient as the Kachhis who have before them the hope that they or their sons may some day pay off their heavy debts to village leaders. The other Sudras accept indebtedness and obligations to patrons as the order of life. When we first came to Karimpur we regarded the carpenters (Sudras) as independent craftsmen. They work in the lane that runs in front of their row of houses, making and repairing the carts, ploughs and other implements of the farmers. Later as we stood watching their work, we overheard patrons ordering—not asking—them to make new handles for tools or to complete certain house repairs. And we realized that they were not independent, as we had thought. To get their payment which in the case of carpenters is fixed, they must go daily to the fields of their patrons during the harvest season, and receive their share of the crop. The shares are given out, more as donations than as payment due, and lay upon the recipient an obligation which he can never quite repay. Among the carpenters we have found some of the cheeriest, most natural friends. Their houses are on our side of the village, and when one of them chops a finger with his adze, he comes over at once for first aid. We fought through days and nights for the life of the baby son of one of them, now the sturdiest among those whom mothers like to call "the Memsahiba's children." A good friend in the States sent money for a brace for a carpenter's lame daughter. It was a real test of their faith in us for them to let us put this weird contraption of leather and steel (which many villagers still hesitate to touch) on the child. The growing son of one of them came to us every day for months for the dose of cod liver oil which helped build up his emaciated body. Now at ten he has begun his apprenticeship in earnest and laughs with us over his early fears of the Sahib and his nasty medicine. The old mother of one of the men was relieved of cataracts by the Mission doctor and considers herself our most special and necessary friend. We have given them all of our carpentry work and have added the construction of wooden models of village carts and implements, to occupy their slack seasons. When the motor was wrecked, two carpenters straightened the twisted frame, while the village tailor patched. The result amused our city friends, but greatly increased village pride in the car.

The other Sudras are much more dependent than the carpenters. They not only go to the harvest fields for the semi-annual dole, but their women and children visit the houses of the great on festival days, standing patiently at the door until the women of the household toss them their portion of special cakes or sweets. They have earned what they receive, but this method of payment lends it the guise of just one more favour.

Whenever we turn from the proprieties of the homes of leaders to enter what we call "Humble Lane" we are surrounded by Sudra friends. At first they were loath to welcome us. Interpreting every incident of life in terms of spirits, chiefly evil, they saw only danger in our advent. But when we succeeded in helping the tailor's wife through a serious illness and when the veterinary surgeon whom we called was able to save the buffalo of the grain parcher's widow, they dared to return our greetings. And by the end of our first year their expectations of us were far beyond the possible. We have spent some of our most unhappy hours among them, when some avoidable illness has brought one of their bread winners to the point of death. And some of our gayest moments have been among them, while the women have dramatically related the latest scandal, or the youthful Kahars (burden bearers) have staged some uproarious farce. Our sons love the industry and democracy of "Humble Lane." They never tire of the whirl of the potter's wheel and the magic which changes the mound of clay into saucers or jars. And while a parcher boy roasts our monkeynuts and grain they squat with other children of the village, listening to the laughter and popping corn, and watching the flaring leaves in the furnace. In this community of Sudras, men and women spend their lives performing the tasks to which they were born.

Some are tailors, some potters, some grain-parchers, some oil-pressers, and many are personal servants and farm hands. Their lot is to supply the wants of their farmer-patrons. And if the latter are satisfied with them, they are content. They accept whatever each day brings, and leave plans and responsibilities for the morrow in the hands of their patrons. They may complain mildly; and when receiving a payment of bread or grain, they go through the formality of considering it very little. But it would not occur to them to ask for better conditions, or freedom. In hot weather they suffer from lack of protection against the heat, and in the winter months they suffer from exposure to the cold. Their clothes are worn, filthy and tattered, but there is food for the morrow. And jewelry and wedding garments are stored away for the next wedding or Fair. Theirs is the cheerfulness that goes with cupboards always almost bare. There will never be abundance, so why struggle. And they know that as long as there is grain in the store-houses of their patrons they will not starve. They may go further into debt, but debt is a familiar associate. If the patron is ill unto death, or if a series of calamities threaten his store-house, there is real anxiety. In a village not far away, a wealthy farmer ignored his responsibility to the families depending on him. It was a bad season, and prices were high. He decided that he would take his grain to the city to sell it at a high ready cash profit, rather than hold it in his store-house to be loaned out to his people. When the first cart was loaded, his dependents realized that they were about to be robbed of their food supply. A crowd of them waylaid the carts a short distance out of the village, unloaded the grain and distributed it amongst themselves, keeping a careful account of every pound. This record, with the usual promises to repay, was presented to the thwarted patron. He took the case to court. His followers were warned not to repeat the offence, but were not punished. The court could not but recognize the justice of the action taken by the villagers, although it was obliged to give a formal reproof.

At the end of "Humble Lane" are the two well kept houses of Mohammedan bangle sellers. And beyond them are cluttered the dirty, crowded huts of other Mohammedans—Fakirs. When we asked a Mohammedan official why these Mohammedans were the dirtiest, poorest people in the village, he disclaimed them, as not being pure Mohammedans but converts from among low caste Hindus. Another Mohammedan, a petty official, explained that these village Mohammedans, due to their dependence on Hindu patrons, have lost their identity as Mohammedans, and cannot be considered as representatives of their religion. Even our Mohammedan cook scorns them, and hastens to disown them as his brethren. He bought goat meat from them twice, before learning from his Maulvi in the town that none of them are qualified to butcher. He has not touched their meat since. And the experience made him suspect that they were not proper Mohammedans. Later he discovered that Hindus of the village smoked the *chilam* (the funnel-shaped red clay tobacco pipe found in every home) with them. And no Hindu as conservative as those of Karimpur would share his pipe with any but accepted Hindus. The officials, and the cook, are in agreement that weak men will do anything for money. The only money—or food—at present available for these Mohammedans is in the hands of Hindu masters. Therefore they have made themselves as much Hindu and as little Mohammedan as possible.

They do not concern themselves with the more personal Hindu observances, especially those related to the preparation of food and the cleanliness of the body. But they celebrate the Hindu festivals as thoroughly as do their Sudra neighbours. On the night of the Feast of Lights, they illuminate their roofs and wall niches with the little saucers of mustard oil. At the time of Karua Chaut, when Hindu wives seek the favour of the gods for their husbands by fasting and by special drawings on their walls, the Mohammedan women do likewise. And they are no more vague as to the meaning of their activities than are the low caste Hindus around them. Above all, they are careful never to miss the festivals which hold a promise of sweets to be handed out by patrons. No one claims them, or troubles to set standards for them either in religious observances or in daily living. And no one shows any interest in them beyond the unskilled services which they have to offer. They do what is demanded of them and relish all the fun that can be squeezed from meagre, sordid lives. They are a gay, happy-go-lucky crowd, when not in desperate need or suffering.

Among these varied groups of farmers and menials, there are a chosen few set aside as ambassadors to spiritdom, known as Bhagats. In ordinary life, Bhagats perform the tasks assigned to the caste groups to which they happen to belong. But they are set apart from ordinary men, because they are imbued with the power of appeasing certain deities. They practice a few austerities, and in moments of ecstasy are able to torture their bodies without consciousness of pain. Their task is to placate offended gods and goddesses and to release the victims of spells cast by capricious spirits. The special ailments of women are regarded as within the scope of their ministrations. And the daughter-in-law who has no children seeks the guidance of one of them. Their exorcisms are invited when a baby is ill. Boils and aching joints are treated by them. When an animal is sick, or a buffalo fails to give milk, the owner sits beside a Bhagat who is in a trance, and relates the trouble. The Bhagat, acting as medium for the goddess, tells him what penances she demands before the trouble can be alleviated.

One of our Bhagats is a stocky, good natured goatherd. We often meet him on the road to Mainpuri, carrying jars of goat's milk to customers in the town, or returning in haste to graze his animals. And we always give him a seat on the running board where, braced by the luggage carrier, he squats and balances his jars. None of us dares to hold or touch a jar because our touch would contaminate the milk. On these trips he has become very friendly and communicative. And it does not hurt his pride to bring his own ailments and those of his family and friends to us. He has supplied us with milk for the past three years, and we have never had reason to register the common complaint of watered milk.

Another Bhagat is a tall, gentle carpenter. When his baby was ill, he spoke to us, but encouraged no treatment. It was in May, and we were staying in our Mainpuri bungalow. His wife brought the baby to us late one night as we were leaving the village, and announced, "It was I, and not the father who bore this child. And I am going to keep him with the Memsahiba till he gets well." The Bhagat protested mildly, reminding her that he would have no one to prepare his food. But with a defiance quite amazing in a woman of our village, she clambered past her husband into the motor. Since that time the Bhagat father has depended on us to help in all his family difficulties. He himself went to our Mission hospital in Kasganj for a serious operation. And for some time afterwards he impressed his friends with the account of his sensations in going under an anaesthetic. There are other Bhagats, some more and some less friendly, but none antagonistic. They are sincere in their belief that they are chosen agents of the gods. If they were consciously deceiving, they would be jealous of the success of our doctor friends. As it is, they regard doctors as co-workers. We have tried never to laugh at their methods. To do so would be to close the door of observation. But on every occasion when we are working together, we draw their attention to the existence of cause and effect, until they themselves are beginning to question some of their practices. We can leave the raillery to their own neighbours. It was a surprise to us to see the Kahars, the village's best actors, in a burlesque on Bhagats, ridiculing their weaknesses, especially in relation to women.

Supplementing the Bhagats are the men known as Hakims, who prescribe complicated mixtures of herbs for the cure of diseases. To mention an ailment in the presence of one of them is like pressing a button. Instantly there pops out a list of ingredients with details of grinding and sifting and brewing. One of them is the elderly farmer whose sight was restored by our Mission doctor. He visits us regularly, suggesting treatments in case one of our own family is not well, and feeling free to praise or condemn any of our activities. He considers himself our guide and preserver. He brings numbers of sufferers to us for help, complicating matters by prescribing his own treatment along with ours. His intentions are good. If there are two kinds of treatment, the chances of cure must be twice as great. The other Hakim is one of the oil-pressers, whose father was reputed for his success in medicine. The son occasionally carries with him the imposing volume of prescriptions inherited from his father, and spends much time searching for the mixture which seems most suitable for the case in hand. He has always been curious about our medicines, and comes over to the dispensary tent to watch the visiting doctor. We encourage his observations, and have gradually won his confidence. He was very much afraid of ridicule in the early days, and it was over a year before he shyly produced his inherited volume, and still longer before he brought to light the bottles and jars of medicated oils which he brewed over a decade ago, and which are yearly becoming more valuable as fever reducers, and liniments. We realized from the beginning that if we were to give what we had to give to sufferers in the village, we must do it with the cooperation and not with the antagonism of these two Hakims. Whenever we are called to a serious case, we know that one of them—most often the oil-presser—has been called before us. There he sits beside the patient, watching and waiting for our suggestions. And the adoption of our advice or treatment depends on his word of approval or doubt, after we have gone. Recently our doctor was in the home of a man suffering from blood poisoning. She lanced and drained quantities of pus from his leg while he shouted and the women of the household screamed. The oil-presser watched with growing admiration. When she had finished he said, "Now look at the other leg." It was covered. The patient pleaded, but the oil-presser remained firm. He had been alone on the case for months, and appreciated the doctor's arrival. The son pleaded. But still the oil-presser insisted, "Let her see it," and removed the covering. The sick man's expression revealed his horror at this betrayal. But the oil-presser had seen our doctors clear up ulcers and boils before. He was not afraid of the outcome. Afterwards, both the man and his family were happy that the hidden ulcers had been treated, but at the moment the slightest sign of unfriendliness or suspicion toward us on the part of the oil-presser would have been welcomed by them as a signal to stop the doctor. With him on the doctor's side, they had not the courage to oppose.

Although the Bhagats and Hakims have become physical and spiritual advisers to their own low caste neighbours, and sometimes to the accepted leaders, their offices in no way conflict with those of the priests. Certain ones among the leaders retain for themselves the priestly duties associated with birth, marriage and death. And they share these rites with Brahmans, or Maulvis in the case of Mohammedans, from the outside world. Their ceremonies follow the prescribed order and take place at times appointed by the sacred Laws. They leave any impromptu, irregular services to the less dignified, more ecstatic Bhagats.

Both Hakims and Bhagats enjoy the authority which is theirs, in their own peculiar fields. But they do not presume to carry it over to any other relationships. When not in action prescribing or interpreting, they are like all other followers, watching their sheep, repairing ploughs for patrons or faithfully performing whatever tasks are assigned them. A Bhagat may be called upon to drive out the evil spirit which has taken possession of the victim of a snake-bite. And as soon as this exalted service is completed, he may be called by his patron to some ignoble chore. He goes to it without any resentment at being thus debased, and without any assumption of superiority carried over from his association with deities. The oil-presser Hakim may be found at the bedside of a man of high caste dictating his treatment, and a few moments later peddling oil through the village. Each knows his appointed place in the village régime, and has no thought of employing his special trust to change the status quo in his favour.

Those who laid down the rules for Hindu society, settled beyond all doubt the religious, social and economic standing of every individual. It is not for any man to choose what he will be. His birth fixes his station. And nothing that he can do will alter the plan. We who are outside the order are amazed at the contentment of all those within it, until we comprehend its strength and all-pervasiveness. Orthodox members of the order are shocked by the reformer who preaches workers' rights. And orthodoxy rides high in villages, especially in those like ours, dominated by Brahmans. On one occasion, when a high caste, unorthodox friend of ours spoke to a group of our villagers about the justice of granting certain rights to Outcastes, a high caste villager spoke up: "Then why were we born farmers, barbers, tailors, carpenters, potters, and the rest?" This attitude, that each man has been created by God to fill a certain position in the great religio-socio-economic order, fosters contentment, or at least resignation. And while such an attitude holds, the village leaders are sure of the unquestioning loyalty of those who follow.

CHAPTER IV

OUTCASTES

Still lower than the Sudras in the Karimpur social scale are the outcastes. Although barred from the four great divisions which include all of the accepted castes, they have a carefully graduated caste system of their own. A leather worker and a sweeper are both outcastes. But the leather worker would not degrade himself by eating or drinking with the sweeper, nor would he consider marrying his daughter to the sweeper's son. Highest among the outcastes of Karimpur is the Dhobi whose appointed task is to wash the skirts and scarves, the shirts and loin cloths of the village.

His position in the village is more like that of a Sudra. But he is an outcaste, according to the traditional law. The rock on which he beats the villagers' garments is at the edge of the tank beside our grove. There he stands on sunny mornings knee deep in water, swinging each garment above his head, thumping it down on the rock, then splashing it about in the tank, and wringing it into a tight wad. Meanwhile, other members of the family spread the washed clothes out on the parched, dusty ground to dry, in a pattern like that of an enormous patchwork quilt. Thanks to the sun, the garments which he gathers up from the ground and returns to his village neighbours are much fresher, though perhaps more battered than they were when he took them away a day or two before. He washes the clothes of high caste families regularly. Housewives of lower castes complain that he often neglects their washing, if not reminded. And the lowest of the outcastes must keep their own garments clean. He refuses to touch them. The Dhobi who worked here when we first came was far from blessed. He was deaf. And he had four daughters, and a widowed sister-in-law who died of tuberculosis two years ago. Girls can deliver clothes, and spread them out to dry, but they are not good at beating, and cannot buy and sell cow-dung cakes—the subsidiary industry which keeps many Dhobis from poverty. Without a son he could not keep pace with the demands from all sections of the village. Neither could he feed his family on the grain and bread handed to the girls as payment. He gave up and withdrew to the home of relatives in another district. When the housewives of the village refused to do the family washings in their courtyards any longer, three leaders went from here to negotiate with the Dhobi. A more satisfactory arrangement was made, and he returned. This is the one method by which a village workman may gain the consideration which he desires. No threats, no disturbance. He simply absents himself until his services are more actively appreciated. The risk of such a move is demonstrated by the sequel to the Dhobi's return. He found the new arrange-men too much like the old to be worthwhile, and again retired to the village of his relatives. This time someone suggested another Dhobi; and a younger man was found who wanted more work than he was getting in his father's village. He was invited to come here, with an understanding as to payments which was a trifle better than that of the former washerman. If the new man and his wife are able to hold their employers to their agreement, the standard of the Karimpur Dhobi will have made a step in advance. No one seems to know or care about the old washerman. He is with relatives, and relatives can be counted on to share their food and labours. The change has come about informally, and without the noise of battle. But it is the outcome of many serious conferences of the leaders and their relatives and friends. The advent of a new washerman not even remotely related to the family which has served the village for generations, has furnished housewives with gossip for months.

The Chamars (leather-workers) live a furlong from the rest of the village in a clutter of huts enclosed by mud walls. Both huts and protecting walls are as weather-beaten and neglected as the Chamars themselves. We have not made much progress in friendliness with them, chiefly because of the inconvenience in reaching them. It is always easier to stop in houses of older friends along the way. Also, the patients whom they have called us to see have been past the point where we or our doctor could help. Their aloofness up to the present time is a

One of the Chamars is acknowledged as the best sower of sugar cane in the village

Occasionally one of them makes a basket for sale

reminder of the attitude of the whole village in the early months of our residence.

The Chamar is less independent than the washerman, or the potter or any other workman who serves many masters and thus is not wholly dependent on the pleasure of one. Each Chamar with his family is bound to one patron. And although he receives a wage, his position is akin to that of a bondsman. In the village he is regarded not as an individual, but as So-and-So's Chamar. Outside of the intimate affairs of family life, his time and his services, and his sons' time and services are in the hands of his master. His wife too must be ready to help in the fields or at the heavier tasks in the house of the patron, whenever sent for. The patron's work and interests come first. If there is any time left over, the Chamar and his sons spend it on the plot of land granted him as payment for his services. He makes no plans and undertakes nothing which involves time or money, without the consent of his patron. One Chamar boy began attending our night school without consulting his patron. The latter happened to be visiting us one night, and looked with interest into the tent where boys were struggling with Hindi. Suddenly his face hardened, and he called his Chamar out. He reminded the boy sharply that there was still plenty of work for him to do—and it was then after 9 P.M. The boy hurried off to his master's house. And he has not attended school since. There is little opportunity for the Chamars to work at their traditional trade. When an animal dies in the village, they are allowed to remove the skin. They cure the hides thus secured by a very simple process, and sell them to Chamars in town. They make and mend the leather bags used in lifting water from the wells for irrigation. And from time to time they sew a patch on someone's shoe, with scarcely more than a "Thank you" for the trouble. This is all incidental to their work as farm hands. But the stigma of handling leather still clings to and labels them as outcastes. They are not only cut off from villagers of caste by the usual barriers of food and water, but are forbidden to share the friendly pipe. A Sudra (belonging to the lowest division of castes) from Mainpuri once visited his relatives in Karimpur. The Chamar boy who accompanied us to Karimpur as messenger boy and chief keeper of the motor, happened to go to the well where the town Sudra was smoking with his relatives. Upon his arrival, the Sudra said, "Now-a-days there is none of the old foolishness of refusing to smoke with Chamars. Here is this boy who has never done any leather work. Come, let him smoke with us." The red clay pipe was passed around, and our young Chamar friend was included in the circle. Then the city Sudra left. The Chamar boy was enjoying the thrill of sharing a caste pipe and wanted to continue. But as soon as their city relative was safely down the road, the Sudras broke the pipe. Their hour of folly was over.

Prem, this messenger boy of ours, rides a bicycle —a rare feat in the village—and is so thoroughly related to the motor and ourselves that his outcaste state is overlooked, except in the serious matters of food and drink, and smoke. In his home village, with his own people, he observes all of the limitations of his birth. But here in Karimpur he has not associated himself with the Chamars. And he has adapted himself to the new freedom, without a blunder to remind himself or others of his customary place. One day an elderly village Brahman sat beside the Sahib in the front seat of the motor. They stopped before the Chamar huts to call for a woman to be taken to the hospital. While two Chamar men lifted the woman carefully into the rear seat, our Brahman friend nearly went through the front glass in his effort to avoid their touch. The touch would not have been contaminating, like that of sweepers, but it was highly undesirable. Then, when the motor started, he made a place at his feet for Prem, our Chamar boy, to perch, leaning against his knees. He chose to overlook the fact that Prem was on exactly the same level as the men whom he had been industriously avoiding.

On another occasion this same boy was walking from Mainpuri out to our camp. A cart passed him on the road, and one of its two occupants called to him to ride. The speaker was a Brahman of Karimpur. The second man, a Brahman of another village, demurred, "But is he not a Chamar?" The first man agreed that Prem's people were Chamars, but added that Prem himself could hardly be called one in our village. He explained, "Here he has become watchman of the Sahib's motor, and that is a job which has no caste." No further objection was raised, and Prem was taken in. He boasted to us of the ride when he got home, and remarked with satisfaction that it would never have happened in the vicinity of his father's village.

Other outcastes are the Dhanuks, who live at the corner of the village farthest from our camp. A series of encounters with members of the group have brought us much closer to them and their households than to the Chamars. The women are the midwives of the village. And where the Memsahiba has been called in to help at a confinement she has worked with one of them. At other times she has followed after them with a doctor, trying to undo some of their damage—the result of well intentioned but ignorant activity. One of the midwives, herself on the verge of confinement, was very ill with pneumonia. The doctor prescribed constant care. Not one of her caste, or outcaste neighbours was willing to come in and touch her. Her own sister had been called but had not arrived. If anything was to be done for her, the Memsahiba would have to do it. She nursed her for days, the husband taking his weary turn at night. Neighbour women would come in to observe, and to tell the woman how sorry they were that she was dying. But they could not help her. To their surprise, she recovered. Later, the husband, as good a type of country bumpkin as our village can produce, was knocked unconscious by the horizontal beam of a sugar press. After a day in the fields, he was doing night duty, feeding cane into the press. He evidently dozed and failed to duck his head as the bullocks swung the beam around to the side where he crouched. His fellow workers came to us, sure that his injury was fatal. The Sahib, armed with spirits of ammonia and antiseptic, applied first aid. And a few days' rest, and faith in our assurances and dressings, gave him strength to return to his employer.

Like the Chamars, the Dhanuks are the drudges among farm hands. Each man is attached to some patron whom he serves at all tasks and in all seasons. A small plot of land, granted by the patron claims any time he has for himself. The profession of the women degrades them, if further degradation is possible. Everything to do with a birth is unclean, and these women who touch the new baby and mother are thereby rendered unclean. At the same time their work makes them freer and more sophisticated than their men folk, as it gives them an entrée in homes of high as well as low castes. And they carry their freedom with a cool boldness that makes their position enviable among women limited to single courtyards.

The only outcastes in our village who are still strictly untouchable are our co-religionists, known to the villagers by the old outcaste name of Bhangi. Early any morning the men of this group may be found herding their swine along the roadsides and open spaces which border the village. These areas serve as village latrines for men and children, and for the women who do not observe purdah. And the swine are the conservancy department, urgent and thorough in their service. During the remainder of the morning, the men loiter along the roads with their swine, keeping them from cultivated fields and guiding them to any stray refuse or to lands where wild roots may be found. Toward noon they drive the animals home, and spend the rest of the day lying about on their rope beds. Occasionally one of them makes a basket for sale; or another goes on a bristle buying and selling expedition. And just before festival days, several of them present themselves at the doors of their patrons, each with a long broom made of lentil stalks. They sweep the lanes and any other open spaces around the patrons' storehouses, raising clouds of dust to impress the world in general, and patrons in particular, with their industry. If any bad news must be sent by a patron to relatives in other villages, a Bhangi acts as messenger. Or if extra help is needed at harvest time, Bhangis may be called upon to help carry sheaves from the fields. These and other desultory jobs fall to them. But the greatest activity occurs when there is a feast in our village or in any village within convenient reach. It may be a wedding or the special reciting of religious poetry. The occasion does not matter. Where there is a feast, there the Bhangis collect—not to share, but to gather up and eat the scraps left on the leaf plates of the party. What they cannot eat at the time, they carry home to be dried and kept for lean days.

To the wives of these men fall the most unpleasant tasks in the village. Each woman makes daily visits to the homes of her more conservative employers, where the women are kept in such strict purdah that they do not go to the fields to relieve themselves. In each house she slinks into the privy beside the courtyard or on the roof, keeping herself out of everyone's way. She gathers the excreta from the earthen floor into her basket, and carries it, along with other household refuse, to the fields. Once a week she is admitted to the family courtyard of each of these homes. Members of the family keep themselves and their vessels carefully aloof while she scrapes clean the corner of the courtyard set aside for bathing and for the washing of cooking utensils. She brushes the scrapings into her basket, then cleans the drain which runs from this washing square along the edge of the courtyard, through the wall and into the lane outside. In some houses instead of flowing into the lane, the water from the drain empties into a large clay jar embedded in the outermost wall. The sweeper woman dips the water from this jar out into the roadway with a scrap of broken clay jar, and carries the objectionable residue to the fields. She goes into still other houses for the drain cleaning, houses where the women go to the fields twice daily and therefore have no privies, but where they are glad to pay a couple of unleavened cakes weekly to spare themselves the need of getting their hands into the slime of the drain.

We had known of the existence of untouchability before we came to the village. But when we found ourselves next door to it, we were oppressed by its actuality. We have learned that it is possible for forty human beings to live on the edge of a village of almost eight hundred, go through the village daily to free it from the most disagreeable of its filth, help in the harvest fields, collect food at the doors of the more prosperous homes, buy spices and oil at the small shops, and regard the village in every way as home, and yet never touch nor be touched by anyone belonging to the village.

Before we had had time to learn who belonged to what group, we were constantly made aware of the presence of an untouchable, by the way in which villagers scattered when one appeared. They shouted threats at any Bhangi who dared approach while they talked with the Sahib. And they were dumbfounded when the Sahib treated the Bhangi with the same consideration as he did them. They tried to warn our boys from the touch of Bhangi children, and were at first annoyed, then resigned, when the boys could not see any reason for fear. One day the Memsahiba stood on the threshold of a high caste courtyard taking leave, just as a Bhangi girl came in to clean the privy. The girl came close, and took the Memsahiba's hand. There was sudden confusion in the group inside the high caste doorway. Children were pushed back to a safe distance, women tightened their draperies about them, and the wife of the head of the household screamed at the Memsahiba and the girl. When her protests became coherent, the

Memsahiba realized that in touching the girl she had committed a terrible faux pas. The housewife drove the girl away, and gave the Memsahiba a lesson in untouchability. After it was over, and the Memsahiba remarked that she went into the home of this girl and others of her group, as freely as into those of caste people, her hostess was horrified. But she finally compromised thus—"If you insist, you may do as you please when out of our sight. But when you are in our homes, we beg you to spare us this embarrassment." The men and children are with us more than the women, and have become accustomed to seeing us with untouchables as with others, until they no longer object. We are casteless and can mingle with all. But as for themselves, the touch of a Bhangi would be pollution. One holiday as we were returning from the untouchable quarter to our camp, a crowd of village children descended upon us ready to play. As the leaders of the group reached us and were about to drag us back amongst them, someone who had seen us leave the house of an Untouchable shouted, "Bhangi." Immediately the children stopped. The warner went on to explain to them that we had just been with Untouchables, and that they would have to wait until we had bathed. The children danced around us, begging us to hurry and bathe so that they might share their game with us. But they made no further attempt to touch us until later in the day.

We have learned very slowly the depth of revulsion of which untouchability is an outward expression. Without the fostering of the inner revulsion, the outward expression could not have survived these many centuries. Although occasioned by the work of scavenging which Bhangi men and women are expected to do, untouchability has attached itself to the group as a whole. Not only are they untouchable during the hours or during the years when they are engaged as scavengers, but from the time they are born until they die. And they become so accustomed to being creatures to be avoided that they feel no resentment. Many a time when we have winced under the scorn or rebuff which we have suffered because of the Bhangis we have had in our tent or in our motor, we have observed that those who gave rise to the scorn, accepted the situation complacently. It is only when the comparative freedom of the city or school has given them a new attitude toward themselves that they become sensitive to their position.

These Untouchables were baptized as followers of Christ about ten years before we came to Karimpur. And we were prepared to find them Christian in every way. We soon realized the unfairness of our expectations, as no one had had time to give them regular teaching since their baptism. And every village contact was on the old basis. They called themselves Bhangi or Christian, whichever seemed expedient. And they saw nothing unethical in the variation. We were shocked when we found that a man coming for medical treament reported himself as a Christian to us, one day, and as a Bhangi to our helper, the following day. Gradually we realized that we were alone in the use of the title, "Christian." And when we remonstrated with those who applied the old title, they smiled tolerantly, and avoided the subject. Later, when our Hindu clerk, who had spent years amongst Christian boys in a Mission school in town, prepared the village census, with a section of Bhangis, and no Christians, we grasped the extent of imperviousness to change.

Our attitude toward the group was confused by their baptism. When we discovered their methods of proclaiming or concealing their allegiance to the Master whom we loved, we almost regretted the fact that they had gone through the form of becoming His followers. If they proposed to live as Bhangis, why defame the name of Christ. Then as we saw more of the degradation thrust upon them under the old régime, we forgave them this reaching out for compassion. We gave them all of the time that we could, sharing with them Christ's message of comfort and courage which seemed to have been intended for men just like themselves. But their idea of what we should do for them was quite different. Like the low-born of any community, they were clever at currying favour. To us they proclaimed their Christianity, and played on our sympathies. They took for granted that when they accepted baptism, all Christian missionaries automatically became their patrons. And never before had a missionary been as accessible as the one now living across the road. While still clinging to their old patrons, they took on the new. On Sunday evenings when the men attended religious services, they nodded their heads and agreed vigorously with all that the Sahib said. And hardly was the final prayer ended when they introduced some relative who was involved in a lawsuit. If the Sahib would only give them fifty rupees, and appear at court, the case would be easily won. They dealt lightly with the merits of the case. They assured us that the Sahib's rupees and presence were really what were needed to secure justice. If we had supported all of the litigation to which we were invited by our Christian brethren during our first six months among them, we would have been bankrupt both as to time and money. There were other requests—favours from official friends, or money for the marriage ceremonies of a daughter, far too young to be married under Christian law. And when the Sahib felt obliged to refuse these requests, they were deeply hurt. Any patron would have welcomed such opportunities—opportunities of drawing them more deeply under obligation to him. We had no desire to place them under obligation to ourselves or to anyone else. And in our ignorance of the offices of a patron, we were irritated by their constant, petty claims upon us. As the working of the patronage system was gradually revealed to us, through all of our village contacts, we were more patient with these men who had always lived according to it. Meanwhile, they had begun to comprehend that becoming followers of Christ was not related to the business of winning favours.

And we approached a better mutual understanding.

Their untouchability, and their vague reaching out for something better challenged us. And just as it would have been easy to be monopolized by those at the top of the social scale, so it would have been easy to devote ourselves to these at the very bottom. This we could not do. Instead, we brought a teacher-pastor to live among them. For several months, he and his family shared the small room and court-yard of one of the Christians. Later, his neighbours built him a little place of his own. His night school, and still more his home, have been the hoped for leaven. Boys and girls, and a few men and women are learning to read and write—a privilege which they always regarded as far removed from them. The Christian homes are happy and clean, and those who live in them are self-respecting in spite of the work to which they must go each day. Faith in a Father who cares for Outcastes as much as for those of caste, has replaced the old fear of evil spirits and the fear of offended deities. The fact that they were Outcastes had always been regarded as evidence of their transgressions in an earlier existence. And the next state might carry them still lower. From that dread they have been released. Every evening a little group sits before the pastor's door, singing *bhajans*, which they once assured us they never could learn. On Sunday evenings, not just the men as in the early days, but men, women and children gather together. In hot weather they sit on the ground under a big neem tree. And in cold weather, they gather around a miniature bonfire in someone's long, narrow front room. In place of the early conception of a religious gathering as an excuse for getting, there is a new consciousness of worship and service. The meetings no longer end in discussions of law-suits, but in a simple ceremony of giving. One representative from each household comes forward with a gift of grain as a part of the family's share in the support of their teacher-pastor. And as each one pours his grain out on a cloth spread upon the ground, he offers a short prayer.

Sanu, the teacher-pastor who has done so much for our people, was himself an ordinary village Christian until four years before he came to us. He herded his swine, and idled, while his wife cleaned privies. He expressed a desire to learn, and was sent to a Training School where he started out with his Primer. His wife read her Primer too, while nursing her baby and watching her two children through the class room door. Neither of them was brilliant, but both were faithful in their studies, and in their efforts to cast off their old careless, dirty ways. When they came to us they were clean, and they did not fawn. They had been away from their outcaste life such a short time that it was not awkward for them to live among outcastes. Their clothes and their food were as simple as the clothes and food of those around them. But there was the difference in essentials which helped raise the standards of their neighbours. A few months ago the pastor's brother died; and the responsibility of retaining the ancestral rights granted by the family patron, rested on him. His relatives urged him to return to his home village to live, for the sake of holding the rights. They saw nothing difficult in his giving up his pastoral work and reverting to the old leisurely Bhangi status. But he saw many difficulties. He talked with us of what the change involved. It meant giving up his independence and acknowledging allegiance to masters who regarded and treated him as an Untouchable. He knew what had happened to others. He recalled a school mate of his who had returned to his ancestral village and who had been told by his patron that as a Christian he could expect no food, favours or rights. As a Bhangi he was entitled to all of these. The Christian considered his family. Behind him were his Bhangi forefathers who had served the forefathers of his patron, and in whose steps everyone expected him to follow. Before him were his own children, looking to him for the support which depended on whether he ingratiated or antagonized his patron. Expediency framed his declaration,—"Sir, I am your Bhangi." Might he, Sanu, yield in the same way? He would be going home with the avowed purpose of claiming the rights granted his forefathers as Bhangis, and passed on to him as a Bhangi. Moreover, not only the attitude of his patrons, but the attitude of all the members of his village, and the carrying on of his traditional function would persist in pressing him down into the old mould. As he struggled to make his choice between the old status of Bhangi with its bondage and its comfortable assurance of daily bread, and the new life of pastor with its high purpose, its freedom, and its risks, his wife made her plea. During four years in the Training School and two years as pastor's wife she had been released from the revolting work which never allowed her to forget that she was despised among women. She could make herself go back to it, as a dutiful wife. But to drag her three beloved baby daughters into it, was more than she could endure. So, for the sake of their children, we think that they will continue in their present work—if relatives do not become too importunate. When relatives enter the field, we cease to conjecture.

Rabindranath Tagore has written beautifully of men and women like our Untouchables, in "The Scavenger."

> Why do they shun your touch, my friend, and call you unclean
> Whom cleanliness follows at every step making the earth and air sweet for our dwelling and ever luring us back from return to the wild?
>
> You help us, like a mother her child, into freshness and uphold the truth, that disgust is never for man.
> The holy stream of your ministry carries pollutions away and ever remains pure.
> Once Lord Shiva had saved the world from a deluge of poison by taking it himself.

And you save it every day from filth with the same divine
sufferance.
Come friend, come my hero, give us courage to serve man,
even while bearing the brand of infamy from him.

If there were more who felt as Tagore does and as other great minds of the nations do, it would not be difficult for men to perform this service and still stand straight among other men. But the village wills that they accept their infamy, and keep their little world clean without the knowledge that they are heroes. If they suspected it, they might become dissatisfied. And dissatisfaction might lead to a change in the existing order. And the retainers of the existing order know that as long as there is no change their power is assured. They have no objection to the change in personal living such as Sanu has wrought among the Bhangis. It might even result in their being more thorough in their functioning as scavengers. But their ideas and ambitions must not clash in any way with those which their patrons have assigned them. If this occurs, pressure must be brought to bear to keep them in their traditional compartment. Only recently a high caste man of our village mocked at our hopes for the Untouchables. "You may think they are Christians," he laughed. "Well, they are Bhangis. And as long as they are Bhangis, they can stay in this village and do the work of Bhangis. But let them deny to us that they are Bhangis, and out they go." The strangle hold.

While this attitude remains, there is little chance for an Outcaste or a man belonging to one of the lower groups of castes, to better himself or his children, within the village where he follows the definitely limited path laid out for his fathers. Unless the new generation of leaders have the courage to face the consequences of greater tolerance, there is little to tempt the more ambitious members of these depressed groups to remain in the village. To improve himself economically, the Outcaste is almost obliged to leave home. Three Christians have already gone from our village to the greater freedom and opportunities of the city. But each one has left his wife behind to carry on her work and thus retain a claim to the rights of the family to all that the patron is expected to give. This is the adventurer's insurance. He can return at any time and lean on his patron, if he is willing to pay the price. The arrangement is far from ideal, and threatens disaster to family unity. We would far rather see the family together in the beauty and wholesomeness of country life. But we cannot say, "Stay," while we know that the strangle hold exists.

In our efforts to get the Christian men to occupy themselves with something more arduous and profitable than swine, we suggested farming. We knew of ex-Bhangis who were farmers in another District. But straightway we trampled on the same old idea of fate—allotted tasks. An old Kachhi friend exclaimed to the Memsahiba, "What is this the Sahib is trying to get the Bhangis to do—work on the land? But that is our right. We were born to work on the land. They were born to clean up village filth. No one has the right to change this order established by God." He had nothing to lose or gain by the work suggested for the Bhangis. He was simply trying to set us straight. The Christians themselves did not encourage the idea. One of them undertook to farm a small plot on shares with a young Brahman who was an outcaste among his own kind. But the other Christians maintained that farming was not their work, even though they recognized the inadequacy of their existing tasks. Furthermore, two of them had tried cultivation on a humble scale, and found it discouraging. They had subrented a field of lowest grade soil from a Brahman, and had watered it from a natural tank. The caste people refused to have their wells used by Untouchables for irrigation. After they had worked the land for two years and made it more fertile, others decided that the field was worth having and offered a slightly higher rent for it,—and got it. After much endeavour, we overcame the opposition both amongst caste men who considered farming as their exclusive right, and amongst those Christians who considered it as not their work and those who were discouraged by earlier experience. We had reached the point of arranging to buy the pair of bullocks necessary for the venture, when the Christians became involved in a quarrel with a Brahman over the trespassing vagaries of their swine. Their bullock money went into the payment of a fine. And the joke was on us, at least until another sowing season arrives.

Whenever we have tried to secure for Outcastes some social or economic benefit which seems to us the reasonable right of any member of the community we have come into conflict with the wills of some of our best friends. Our latest endeavour has been in education. Muni, our pastor's only son, is nine years old. The father expressed the hope that his son might have advantages greater than his own. And the first logical step was to get the boy started in regular school work. The father was away during the day, visiting and helping Christians in other villages. He tried instructing his son in odd moments before and after his day's work. But this proved inadequate. We consulted the master of the District Board School in our village. He said that if we would wait until the beginning of a new term, we could enter Muni in the school. When the new term opened we sent Muni. The master had been with Christian boys in a Town School, and saw nothing heretical in the presence of a Christian. But to the village boys Muni was a Bhangi. At noon of the first day, all of the older boys took their books and slates home, and refused to return to school. The smaller children returned. But at the close of the afternoon session, when their parents became aware of what had happened, they were thoroughly bathed. On the following day a few children from the lower castes answered the roll call. And from then on, all fifty were absent, and Muni remained the lone pupil. Knowing how cruel boys can be, we sent our eldest son, Arthur, just Muni's age, along with him as bodyguard. Arthur was friendly with the whole village, and we felt sure that no one would damage Muni with him as escort. But there was no teasing, and no attempt to stop him. The village youngsters, free from school, revelled in their unexpected holidays. And when we went into the village our friends were as cordial as ever. The school was not mentioned. One of the two school masters spent the first few days of absences trekking across fields to neighbouring hamlets and villages from which boys had come regularly to our school. No one was prepared to send his child to a school attended by a Bhangi. In vain the teacher explained that this particular boy was a Christian and that his parents did no scavenging. But to village folk a Bhangi was always a Bhangi, nothing but a Bhangi, and as such had no business in a school attended by caste children. A month passed. The Sahib was the first to introduce the subject. One evening, while with a group of leaders, he asked why it would not be possible for this boy, with no taint of the Bhangi about him or his parents, to learn along with more fortunate children. The boy had expressed his willingness to sit apart from the others. He was not going to school for the purpose of touching them. He could learn without touching them, just as all of his untouchable neighbours did everything else without touching any member of the village. Then the village leaders expressed their feelings. Government had no right to upset the established order by allowing children from any caste or outcaste group to attend school. And the Sahib was making a great mistake in giving a Bhangi the notion that he could learn. If the boy must be taught, let him learn from his own father. Or let there be a separate school for such boys. The Sahib's explanations were heard, but were considered unsatisfactory. The son of the head-man was sitting near the group. He had passed the standards included in the village school and was now enrolled in a school in town. "Have you been attending the Town School?" the Sahib asked. The boy said that he had. "And Christian boys attend the Town School?" The boy admitted that they did. The head-man nervously tried to change the subject, but the Sahib was relentless. "And you sit with them in classes and play games with them?" he persisted. And the boy confessed that he did. Among those who heard, some were incredulous and others were shocked. This then was the price of higher education. However, the head-man was prepared. He explained that when villagers go to town or to fairs or on trains, they put themselves into the hands of others, and are not responsible for any defilement. But here in the village they are responsible for their own contacts and those of their children. No Bhangi should become a regular attendant of the Karimpur School.

The Sahib consulted the members of the District School Board. They had already received a petition from our village friends that Muni be put out, and had replied that legally a child of any caste or creed might attend a Government supported school. Most of the members of the Board were friends of ours, and were likewise friendly toward our democratic principles. But they could not force parents to send their children to school. If the parents of the Karimpur area boycotted their school much longer, it would have to be closed. And they did not want this to happen, any more than we did. One friend of many years experience, advised us to give up our stand. The villages of our District were not yet ready for such a radical move. Outcaste children had begun attending other schools in the District. They had had no one of influence to back them, and after a few weeks of enthusiastic school attendance, they were suddenly absent. No one quite knew why. Evidently the old forces were brought to bear, effectively. Even though we might succeed in giving our protégé a chance in school while we were in the village, he would be forced out as soon as we left. The Sahib persuaded a Swarajist Brahman friend to visit the village. He tried patiently to reason with his fellow Brahmans. But they were unmoved. His position confused them. Here was a man who did not favour the present Government and yet who agreed with Government in the erroneous idea that all should have equal opportunities. Moreover, he was a Brahman. And yet he said there was no harm in exposing one's children to the company of an Untouchable. They concluded that there was no good in education after all. Boys who went to school were only spoiled, and no longer wanted to work on their father's land. One of the elders declared that when he was ten he could have pushed over the whole crowd of present day school attending boys, in one husky push. Another reminded his brethren that from their village four young men (all Brahmans) had become school teachers. And all four had died, while still young. This was conclusive evidence against education. Yes, it would be well for them all if the school were closed. But later, away from the ears of leaders, a father approached the Sahib with the assurance that if he could persuade the two most powerful leaders to send their boys back to school, most of the other parents of the village were prepared to follow. They could not make the break without their leader's sanction.

Three months have now passed. The School Board has kept the school going, although only three caste boys have returned and they, surreptitiously. The latest proposal—that a separate entrance, and a low-walled enclosure be provided for unwanted pupils—has been refused. Our leaders, even the most unselfish among them, cannot risk this weakening of the old structure. They are reproachful, feeling that we in our stubborn ignorance have spoiled the school. But we regard ourselves simply as the advance guard of a movement which is sure to reach one District, as it has the most progressive parts of the country. And if we can somehow persuade our friends to accept the change which is being wrought gradually and civilly, they will be spared a painful shock when compulsory education descends upon them.

CHAPTER V

OCCUPANTS OF THE FRONT ROOM

When the cattle come home in the evening, our village lanes are transformed into stables. City visitors who go through the village with us at this hour step gingerly over streams of urine and piles of dung while picking their precarious way around and behind munching buffaloes and bullocks. After dark, when nights are cold, the animals are led into the cattle room, the front room of every farm house. If the men of the family have no room for themselves, apart from the courtyard where the women stay, they sleep on their rope strung cots, or beds of straw, among the cattle. On suffocating summer nights, both master and animals sleep in the lane outside the door.

The farmer is with his bullocks more than with the human members of his family. And he takes for granted that if we are ready to nurse his wife and children in times of illness, we will give the same care to his animals. When a cow is the only cow and a pair of bullocks are the only bullocks which a family owns; and when they occupy the front room or share the family court yard, they are distinctly members of the household. We have tried to accustom ourselves to their importance and propinquity.

But we still find it disconcerting while leaning over a patient to have a buffalo a few feet away shaking its head, glowering with its bulging, red-rimmed eyes, and snorting at the intrusion of our strange paraphernalia,—even though it is tied. As for prescribing for animal ailments, we registered blank. When Tori came to us one night, wringing his hands, and begging the Sahib to come and help his buffalo, "about to die," the Sahib confessed his inability to help in such a situation. Tori described the buffalo's condition. But it was unintelligible to the Sahib. His protests of ignorance were in vain. The importunate Tori insisted, "If you will only see the buffalo, you will be able to do something." The Sahib unwilling, and overcome by his sense of helplessness, was led by lantern light to the lane in front of Tori's house where the animal lay, suffering from what the Sahib learned later was a hernia. All were expectant when the Sahib arrived—they did not know then as they do now how little he knows about the care of animals. The Sahib suggested that the animal be taken to the District Veterinary Officer, six miles away. But all protested that it could not survive such a trip. The only alternative was to get the Veterinary Officer to Karimpur. And the Sahib volunteered to bring him in the motor. A sigh of relief passed through the group. The Sahib found the Veterinary Officer awaiting the arrival of his supervising officer. After some hesitation he came, with a compounder and his instruments. The lane was turned into an operating theatre. Rice straw was spread on the ground. The buffalo was tied, thrown, bound, and sat upon by eight strong men. A carpenter was commandeered to be assistant surgeon, and the Sahib held the lantern. Needle after needle broke as the doctor tried to bind the tough skin together over the bit of protruding intestine. But persistence won. And during the succeeding four years the buffalo has amply rewarded her owner for his importunity on that memorable night.

The experience was the first of several which impressed upon us the necessity of including animal husbandry in any effort at village service. We have regretted our own inability to meet the need. Fortunately we have had a District Veterinary Officer who has been willing to cooperate. In times of emergency he has been most helpful. When rinderpest was playing havoc with the cattle of the District, he informed us that there was danger to the cattle of Karimpur. He offered to supply the anti-rinderpest serum free if the Sahib would advise the villagers to have their cattle inoculated. We had been reading Government bulletins on the effective immunity and the negligible after-effects of this inoculation, and were prepared to support it. The officer brought his bottles of serum, and the Sahib accompanied him through the village and the fields. Farmers working their bullocks at the wells were doubtful, but the Sahib accepted full responsibility and agreed to pay fifty rupees in case of any ill effects. In this way he was able to secure the cooperation of all whom they met. The Veterinary Officer inoculated over two hundred of our village cattle in two days. Even the Bhagat who propitiates spirits which may reside in animals, brought his cattle to be inoculated. The Patwari who is supposed to report every epidemic to the proper authorities that it might be checked, arrived on the scene after the work was finished. He had not been interested in the fate of the cattle, and for the first time in his career there was someone in the village with interest and power enough to secure official aid without his intervention. The Sahib, in his desire to help his farmer friends, had not thought of the Patwari until the latter came hurrying with apologies and his diary. He begged the Veterinary Officer to note in his diary that he—the Patwari—had rendered every assistance necessary. This request was made in the presence of the Sahib and was refused, much to the consternation of the Patwari.

Only a few farmers aspire to own two pairs of bullocks. The ordinary man contents himself with one pair. And he regards them as his indispensable co-workers. They plough his fields, help sow his seed, send water to his crops from the wells during the dry months of both winter and summer, press his sugar cane, and carry to market any produce which he may have to sell. If he loses one of them, he must borrow an animal from one of his neighbours. But borrowing is uncertain. When he needs the help of bullocks most his neighbours are all using theirs. If he cannot borrow, and cannot face the burden of the purchase of a new animal, he must sacrifice his holdings and work only a small plot by hand, or take a chance at hiring himself out to others more fortunate.

The villager depends on a cow or a buffalo for his milk supply. He prefers a buffalo, because it gives more milk, and its milk is richer in the fats which go into *ghi* (clarified butter). If a buffalo is beyond his means, he invests in a cow. And if he is too poor for a cow, he gets a goat or two. It is not so much the milk that he wants as the *ghi* made from it. He and his family drink very little milk lest they cut down the quantity of *ghi*. The whole milk is boiled, and set, and churned daily. The butter is accumulated for a week and clarified. It is the only animal fat used in the diet of the villagers except in the few cases where meat is used. The buttermilk from each day's churning is used freely in a number of important dishes, adding to their flavour and nutrition. And during a great part of the year it constitutes the farmer's early morning meal. The discontinuance of the milk supply is very upsetting. Water may replace buttermilk, and mustard oil may replace *ghi*. But water is a sad substitute. And mustard oil, in many dishes, is distasteful to those accustomed to *ghi*. It is considered unworthy of the special delicacies associated with festivals and the entertainment of guests. If an animal stops giving milk for no accountable reason, its owner consults a Bhagat, that he may make the necessary reparation for any offence against the gods. Recently a Bhagat told one such owner that if he would feed five Brahmans on an auspicious date, he would again have milk. The owner gave the unceremonious reply that he would feed the Brahmans after the gods had renewed his milk supply, and not before. Far worse than being without milk temporarily, is the loss of the giver of milk through death. To buy a new milch animal demands an outlay of capital which staggers a thrifty farmer. If his hidden hoard, or his creditor, cannot stand the strain of the investment, he resigns himself to the hope that the calf will survive. Or he buys a calf, and feeds it as little as possible, while waiting for the happy day when there will be milk in his house once more.

Some of the most heated quarrels in the village have been precipitated by wayward animals. The sheep and goats which are kept in flocks by the small community of shepherds and goatherds, must be guided past unprotected fields of grain on their way to the uncultivated stretches. If the shepherd or goatherd stops to watch a passing motor, or to listen to an argument over field boundaries, his animals stray into the nearest pulse or corn, and are able to do considerable damage before they can be recalled. On one such occasion, a farmer happened to arrive just in time to find his field being devastated. Cursing the shepherd, he caught as many of the animals as he could and threatened to keep them. The shepherd's plea was that without his sheep he would be without means of livelihood. He was following the paths and the duties of his forefathers and could not turn to any other occupation. When a number of friends had interceded, and a promise had been exacted that the trespassing would not be repeated, the farmer set the sheep free. In poorer households, the two or three goats which supply the family with milk, are taken out to graze by the smaller children. If the children run off to play and forget them, they can do enough damage to upset a section of the village, if not discovered. A sadhu who settled in the village for several months first incurred the displeasure of his supporters by allowing his hobbled pony to wander into their grain fields.

Village boys collect cows and buffalos from their own and neighbouring houses and drive them out to the edge of the village where the herd is formed. Under their youthful drovers, the cattle can do more damage than any of the smaller animals, as they pass tempting, unfenced fields on their way to the grazing areas. Not long ago, a small boy of grain-parcher caste was taken to the hospital to recover from a beating administered by a Brahman. The latter had warned the boy that he must keep the cattle in his charge out of a certain field, and when the cows did not move on, the man vented his wrath on their keeper.

Similar complaints of trespassing are frequently heard against the swine. But whenever it is suggested that swine are such a nuisance that they should be banished from the village, the farmers protest—even those who are loudest in their condemnation of the swine-herds. Every villager recognizes the services rendered by the swine in cleaning roadways and open spaces on the borders of the village used as latrines. But if on their scavenging trips to and from these spaces, they touch a farmer's grain field or his stacks of fodder, the farmer is overcome with rage. One of the most amusing sights in camp last year was that of a high caste neighbour, trying to escort a herd of squealing swine from his field where he caught them trespassing to the nearest cattle pound three miles away. In one hand he still clutched his small brass water jar, which he had had with him in the field when he discovered the culprits. With the other he wielded a long club, partly to control the swine, and partly to keep them at a safe distance from himself. He shouted and cursed as he careered through the fields behind his grunting victims. He had not gone far when they were scattered through his neighbour's fields, leaving destruction and wrath in their wake. It was hours before the swine-herd was able to collect and quiet his animals. They never reached the pound. A similar incident occurred later, when the Sahib was ill with typhoid fever. It ended in blows between Christian swineherds and high caste men, and a lawsuit, with damages to be paid by the swineherds.

The only animals that wander unhindered over fields and threshing floors are the Brahmani bulls—bulls set at large as an act of religious merit, usually at the death of a prominent Hindu. They are the only full grown bulls available for the service of village cows. One such bull spends a great deal of time in our grove. Sometimes we do not see him for weeks. Then he returns to stay in our neighbourhood for a month or two. While here, he wanders off every morning to convenient fields, where he grazes on the best, at leisure. And every evening he returns, following the herds of cows on their way home. Having no fixed abode and belonging to no one in particular, he is in everyone's keeping and entitled to a share of everyone's food supply. A farmer does not try to keep his own bulls after they are three or four years old, because they become unmanageable. He refuses to have an animal castrated while in his possession. Instead he exchanges each of his young bulls for one that has been castrated by wandering drovers. And he gets several more years of field labour from the new bullock than he could hope for if he were to keep his own uncastrated animal. For propagation purposes he depends, theoretically, on Brahmani bulls. But as there are only two which visit our village, and one of these comes out rarely, the service to cows is usually rendered by the young bulls which have not yet been exchanged.

Government, knowing the need for good bulls, has made it possible for each District to have a free gift of ninety pure bred bulls from the Punjab. As villagers come to recognize the value of these bulls it is hoped that they themselves will purchase them. The idea is that some farmer or a group of farmers will house and care for a bull, as a form of community service. With this ideal before us we got one of the young Government bulls for Karimpur. We arranged for a farmer to house it and feed it at night; and during the day it was taken out grazing with the other animals of the village. All went well until he began to mature and wandered off after some of the cows. In his wanderings, like the Brahmani bulls he grazed where he chose. This was not acceptable to the villagers. Had he been a Brahmani bull, they could have said nothing. He would have been no one's responsibility. But this bull belonged to the Sahib. Therefore, the Sahib was responsible for its waywardness. The farmers who complained loudest did not stop to think that they might be the first to benefit by the service of the bull when it matured. Their eyes were fixed on the present, and the unfenced fields which an unruly bull might sample. If the bull had been old enough to start giving service as soon he came to the village, they would have understood. But to accept the burden of sharing in his feeding with no actual service in sight, was a strain. Matters were complicated by the fact that the farmer whom we had been paying for the grain which the bull was supposed to consume, had neglected to mention the fact, and had given the others the impression that no such provision had been made. One night a delegation of farmers came to the Sahib, complaining of the weakness of his bull for grain fields. When he explained that he was paying for the feeding and grazing, they turned on the farmer who housed the animal. He said that he would have nothing more to do with it. Our beautiful bull was not wanted by any one farmer in

Karimpur, although everyone recognized his latent advantages.

A year earlier, at the time of a District Exhibition, the Sahib had suggested that a Government bull in the possession of a big Zamindar of the District be exhibited. One of the Exhibition Officials sent a request to the Zamindar for the animal, only to find that no one knew at that time where the bull was. He was serving the country side according to the traditional custom. It seemed very strange to us at the time that a Government bull should be treated in the same way as a Brahmani bull. But when we began to face the solid opposition of the village there was only one choice other than that of losing the bull for our village, and that was to do what the big Zamindar did—and what most other recipients have been obliged to do—release him and treat him as a Brahmani bull. He had been stall fed in Karimpur long enough to consider this his home and we had every assurance that he would stay in the immediate neighbourhood. Accordingly, we announced that henceforth no one was responsible for him and there would be no one to whom disgruntled villagers could complain. We are responsible to the Government to notify them if the animal falls ill or meets with any misfortune. The risks are very small because of the reverence for cattle and for wandering bulls in particular. Thus has the first step been taken toward a better breed of cattle in the neighbourhood of Karimpur, not at all as we thought it would be done, but as custom prescribes.

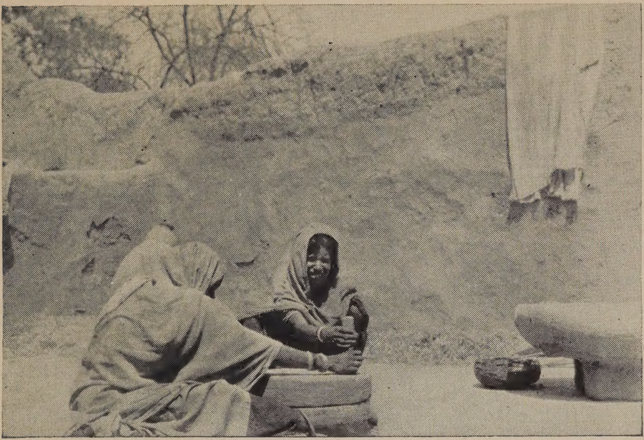
Animals which share in the family struggle for existence are treated with consideration and kindness. Both milk and work animals fare almost as well as the rest of the household. The baby calves are petted and mauled by the children. When big enough to be taken out grazing, they are pushed and dragged by hilarious youngsters to scattered patches of dusty grass. In our grove they are hauled to some deserted threshing floor where they are made to go through the form of treading out grain while the children drive or push them round and round, imitating the cluckings and scoldings of their elders. In orthodox households, the first unleavened cake of the day is always fed to the cow. The farmer's first duty of the day, and last duty at night is the chopping of dry fodder for his animals.

Along with kindness goes the consistent refusal to take animal life. Rats infest village houses, and yet beyond an occasional flourish, housewives make no move toward extermination. The deer and the peacock destroy the crops in distant fields. Farmers brandish their staves, and spread thorny branches along the edges of the most valued plots. But there is no thought of destroying the invaders. When heads of grain are ripe, and tempting to the birds, the farmers set up scare crows, sometimes with an ingenious arrangement for a clatter when breezes blow. In many of the fields, platforms about four feet square are constructed of grass and bamboo and perched on bamboo poles, high above the heads of grain. They are just strong enough to hold the children or the old women who sit on them, clapping their hands and shouting at the birds. Each child on watch has a long, woven rope sling with which to hurl stones at the small thieves, but never with any intention of killing.

Strangely out of harmony with their kindliness, is the irresponsibility of villagers toward unproductive domestic animals. These they casually entrust to Providence. Dogs are rarely fed. Mangy, and alive with fleas and ticks, they wander about the village lanes, stealing any unguarded food or devouring any waste which their desperate noses scent. Our suggestion that puppies unprovided for be drowned, is met with gentle remonstrance. And yet those which do not starve in infancy are allowed to grow up into an existence of constant fighting over stray scraps, until they die and are devoured by vultures and their own starving brothers. The dogs haunt our camp day and night. The rubbish can is upset and emptied by them after every meal. Some have succeeded in opening the tin boxes in which our stores of cereals and rice are kept. Bricks and other boxes piled on top of the flour tin did not discourage one mother dog. She nosed into it whenever the tent was deserted, in her desperation to get food, to care for the litter of starving pups awaiting her in a deserted house. A loaf of bread disappeared from the dining table one evening when the family stepped out of the tent for a moment to welcome guests. Dirty dishes must be washed immediately or there is a crash as some dog tries to carry off a cup partly filled with milk or tea. Even a bowl of paste left on the desk was licked clean and dropped outside the office tent door. Our own dogs have not learned to tear and bite with the ferocity of their village neighbours and offer little resistance. When lured into a fight, they come out battered and bleeding. Dogs which go mad are allowed to wander dangerously until they die, or until Outcastes agree to beat them to death. When one of our own dogs contracted rabies, our neighbours sympathized with us in the unpleasant course of injections through which we all went, but they disapproved of the shooting of our dog.

Animals which share in the labours of production sometimes suffer from the same indifference. As the threshing has gone on outside our tent, we have pitied, and eventually championed, the smaller bullocks which after hours of circling beside larger animals, have stumbled and fallen and are still prodded round and round over the threshing fioor. When a bullock collapsed on the incline beside the well just beyond our camp, the owner threw a gunny cloth over it and left it where it lay, much to the dismay of our boys who were troubled by the possibility of attacks upon it by jackals or other wild creatures which haunt the fields by night. It survived, and the next morning it was helped to a patch of sunshine where gradually it regained its strength. The bullocks on which the oil-presser depends for the turning of his press are allowed to work with bodies covered with open, fly-infested sores. Some of our most prosperous farmers have been unwilling to buy disinfectant which they knew would relieve their cattle from a painful and dangerous hoof infection. The washerman and the potter load their small donkeys with clay jars or clothes, or cow dung cakes, without any apparent thought of the slender legs which bend until they seem about to snap. Cows and buffaloes too old to furnish milk are not treated cruelly, but simply allowed to starve. The same happens to young male buffaloes. It is the female buffaloes that are in demand. The males are unwanted. And little effort is made to keep them alive. The few which survive are sometimes used for field work, in emergencies. More often they are sold to wandering buyers or to poorer farmers who have never been able to afford bullocks. By nature and by religious training, the villager is unwilling to inflict pain or to take animal life. But the immemorial grind for existence has hardened him to an acceptance of the survival of the fittest.

A villager's animals could do much better work for him if he were to give them the added care necessary to bring them up to the maximum of utility. Even the dogs now accepted as nuisances, would help in guarding homes and animals, if fed and trained. One dog in the village is cared for, and has rewarded his master by his faithfulness as watchman. No stranger ventures near his door, and the master boasts that he can leave his womenfolk for a month without fear. Farmers have become skilful in reckoning the minimum of food necessary for maintaining animal service. And it is difficult for them to improve the quality or add to the quantity until they are assured that the change is warranted by increased service. Cows are fed just enough to assure their calving and giving a little milk. They are grazed during the day on lands which yield little vegetation, and are given a very sparse meal at night. When villagers hear of the milk records of improved breeds of milch animals, they wag their heads and dismiss the marvel as something remote from their problems. They are giving and receiving what their fathers before them gave and received. Visits to the District demonstration farm have convinced them that stronger work animals can be secured by improving the breed. But as long as they sell their young bulls, and buy other castrated animals from outsiders, they realize that there is little advantage in improving the breed of their own stock, except for milk animals. Until they are educated up to the point of undertaking every step involved in the development and care of better animals, there is small prospect of improvement. They are not lacking in personal interest. There is nothing they appreciate more than help in the preservation of their present inferior stock. Neither would any of them set out deliberately to avoid better animals. They simply accept things as they find them, and go on limiting the efficiency of their animal helpers by fostering a husbandry based on tradition rather than on science.



The widow goes on living and working around, much as she did before her husband's death

One of the watchmen is content to live on his honorarium and the earnings of his wife

CHAPTER VI

IN FAMILY COURTYARDS

As we go through the village, we are no longer conscious of mud walls, but of the life going on before and behind them. Before them, in the lanes, children skip and turn somersaults, farmers feed their animals, and craftsmen work at their trades. Behind them, further protected by the cattle rooms, are the women and babies in the family courtyards. Women of families of serving castes are obliged to go out for a part of each day, to the houses of employers, carrying water or grinding grain. But in every home where it is possible, the women and smaller children of the family—be it large or small—spend their lives in the family courtyard. The mud walls which protect the villager's family and possessions are as high at the back of the house as at the front. And there are no back doors through which neighbours may slip informally. The family court may be provided with a ladder by way of promoting limited neighbourliness among the women. And the houses of the most prosperous have narrow, steep mud stairs leading to a small roof room through which they may pass to neighbours roofs. At the back of the family courtyard or on either side of it are one or more store-rooms, only used for living purposes when rain deluges the courtyard or cold drives the family behind closed doors.

The men regard this courtyard as the women's realm, and chafe the man who spends much time there. For themselves they have mud platforms at the front of their houses where they do their chores and sit with friends, smoking and talking. Or the men of related households share *abaithak*, or "sitting place," under a big *neem* tree. A man does not go into the family quarters of another unless special business calls him there. And then he usually enters accompanied by a man of the family, coughing loudly to warn the women into seclusion. The Sahib has been in some of these courtyards in times of distress, and at such times the daughters have helped with his ministrations, and, rarely, a wife has appeared. In their own courtyards, the women go about their work scolding, laughing, chaffing, grumbling, without reserve. But the instant a man of the family enters they become self-conscious, covering, or making a pretence at covering their faces, bowing their heads and in every way emphasizing their sex and their role as subordinates. In families where economic pressure compels a woman to venture beyond her own mud walls, she goes cowering along the lanes, managing to keep her face hidden while balancing the jars of water or baskets of refuse which she must carry. In her own back lane, if she is of humble caste and if the men folk are away in the fields, she is freer, but still ready to hide herself or her face if outsiders pass by. And she is never quite at ease until she gains her own doorway.

Patience and service were demanded of the Memsahiba before she was freely welcomed behind the mud walls. There was also the period of extensive and intensive questioning through which she had to go. Nothing about her person or her mode of life was neglected. Questions were not delicately veiled, but came directly and openly to the point. When she had finally convinced them that in every way she was made like themselves, their curiosity waned and a normal level of companionship was found. Even now when some new relative comes to visit, the Memsahiba is obliged to recount old tales, such as the strange custom of her people which allows a girl to grow up unmarried, to know boys of her own age, and, breathless climax, to decide whom she will marry. But in normal times, there is the mental relaxation of following the topics of interest to women limited in outlook to their own households. Round and round the same circle they move—babies, husbands, food, physical ailments, all interwoven with their simple faith in spiritdom. Affairs of state are relatively unimportant. When newspapers were headlined with the "Passing of the Sarda Bill," the Memsahiba tried to interest the women in its significance, with indifferent response. On the same day there was a back page item, reporting a rumour that locusts had devoured a baby in a District some distance from ours. The Memsahiba mentioned this item shortly after the Declaration had been cursorily dropped. Immediately interest was roused. The women had heard of it several days before. Again and again they rehearsed the tragedy, expressing their horror and sorrow. A mother losing her baby—this was within their grasp. On other occasions, when someone has asked about travel and the Memsahiba has been in the midst of a description of Calcutta or Delhi, one of the older women has brought the conversation back to the circle of interest by reminding the Memsahiba that her youngest child is four and it is time that she had another, or by tapping the abdomen of a young neighbour and wisely suggesting that we ask what she has there.

Babies are longed for, and greatly loved when they arrive. No one considers himself too busy, or too dignified to stop a moment to enjoy the antics of his youngest. The natural kindliness of village folk leads one to expect the same attitude toward all children. But the spirit of caste has so permeated their lives that they are indifferent toward children outside their own brotherhood, especially toward the children of outcastes. It still hurts to see a grandmother of caste suddenly change from proud smiles to vindictive shouts because some outcaste toddler has innocently ventured near her grandchild.

Our village mothers have not had the training which turns maternal worries to diet and germs. Instead, they think of the evil spirits and jealous deities, which threaten their loved ones. When a baby arrives, there is no more outward preparation for his coming than there is for the birth of a calf. The village midwife who officiates is always dirty. And she takes less pains than usual to be clean for this occasion. After the baby's first cry she gives him a casual bath while one of the women or children of the household scrambles about in search of some old, cast-off garment to wrap him in. This, with all the apparent neglect that follows, is not at all because he is unwanted but because any fuss over him might attract the notice of some unfriendly presence. On the rope bed where he lies there is always a sickle or other bladed implement, or a monkey skull if it can be secured to frighten evil spirits away. When the big lovable doctor was called in to see a new mother, she was greatly entertained to find a dirty village midwife holding the wee baby, undressed, in one arm, while from the other dangled a three foot sword. We support cleanliness and its allies on every possible occasion, and mothers are eager to cooperate in the hope of saving their babies. But it is with fear and trembling that they adopt new methods —with one hand still clinging to the old charms.

As the baby of the family grows large enough to be played with, he is the household pet. When a new baby arrives to usurp his place, he sits on the earth floor close beside his mother wailing for the snuggling warmth that has been his and which is now being enjoyed by the newest comer. The girls of the family are his willing slaves, often lugging him about on slender hips when both he and they might be better off if he were on his own feet. There is a three year old who spends much time in our grove riding thus on his sister's hip. When we persuade him to try walking, he takes a few straddling steps, then sits down and howls at his sister's neglect. She beams with pride at her importance to him, and lifts him back to her hip, bouncing him from tears to smiles.

Whatever a baby wants he receives, if it is within reach of brothers or sisters or parents or grandparents. If he cries, it is a signal for him to be fed. One of our hardest tasks is to convince a mother that her baby's cries may not always mean hunger, that his dysentery is aggravated by overfeeding. The Memsahiba spent two terrible nights with a mother and baby son when the doctor had warned her that feeding would be fatal. Every time the restless child cried, the mother was frantic in her desire to nurse him. And she was too desperate to listen to reason. She hated the Memsahiba that night and the next. But when the siege was over, her gratitude was great. If a baby's sores must be scraped or if any treatment gives him pain, it is the father or uncle who braves the ordeal. Although a father's tears flow with his child's, he knows enough of medical service to suffer the treatment. If the child is in his mother's arms, she refuses to have him hurt, no matter what the ultimate benefit may be. She will endure anything, herself. But expose her baby to pain—no. One morning we took the doctor into a home where the women had been worrying the Memsahiba about the slight operation needed for the first born of one of the daughters of the family. When the Memsahiba took the baby in her arms and the doctor began snipping, the baby cried. The mother and grandmother wept, and begged them to stop. The doctor was too busy to listen. They tugged at the Memsahiba's arm, but she warned them that a jerk might cause the baby much harm, and pain. They wrung their hands. A sister-in-law dragged herself from the bed where she was lying with her three day old son, and came to our feet to add her supplications. One of the women saw a drop of blood, and the demands that we stop, grew to cries. And then it was all over. The mother had her baby at her breast again. They have forgotten the torture of the baby's crying now, and take unto themselves great credit for having arranged for the operation. The humouring of the smaller children goes on until they are old enough to take their places as helpers. Often the Memsahiba has exclaimed, "He shouldn't be eating that sweet cake. He'll have a pain inside." The mother's reply is simple and final, "But he wants it." If a small boy does not get what he desires, he lies on the ground and kicks and cries and refuses to move until he gets it, or a satisfactory substitute. Little sisters seldom resort to this. Their training in self restraint begins early. For them the step from petting and babyhood to a sharing of family burdens is much easier than for the boys.

Like mothers everywhere, those of our village thrill at the dependence of the new little lives on themselves. And they prolong the pleasure of this dependence as long as possible, without the knowledge that it might be harmful to the child. A mother is proud of the fact that her baby of two refuses all food but her milk. And at the same time is distraught because the child is languid, emaciated, and steadily losing. Sometimes a child of four comes running in from play, dashes up to his mother as she squats on the ground working or visiting, pushes aside her scarf or short vest, and when satisfied, runs off again. There are other reasons for this prolonged lactation, but when the Memsahiba remonstrates, the explanation invariably given, with a sigh of content, is, "He cries if I refuse it."

As girls grow older, their work and interests draw them more and more closely to their mothers. And as the time of marriage approaches, with the dread of a mother-in-law, a girl clings to her mother as her strongest ally. The boys, as soon as they are able, desert the women's quarters for the fields and the companionship of the men. It is a period when a mother faces the realization that she is no longer needed. Then comes the boy's adolescence with the preparations for marriage. He is drawn again into the family courtyard, sung to, and talked to by the women. The ceremonies through which he must go, are in their hands. This is their dramatic outlet, their fun. And it satisfies their repressed longing to be of importance to him. During the interim between earlier and final ceremonies, he may return to the men; but the women know that he will come back to them, when the bride comes to stay. At this stage, his newly roused passion is fanned by the women. In their restricted lives, they are bound to encourage sexual excitement. They have the bride in their control, and while they have her, they can be sure of the importance of their position in the life of the one time baby now a young husband. He transfers his interests from the world of men to the women's quarters, and they rejoice.

A short time ago, the Memsahiba was sitting in one of the better courtyards of the village, when she observed the fifteen year old son of the household lying on the earth floor, his head and shoulders propped up against a tilted rope cot. His eyes were half closed, and he was obviously dreaming, not of us. It was an unusual pose for this particular boy, who has been one of the most promising all round athletes among the youths of the village. When the Memsahiba expressed her surprise that he was not in school, the women nodded and smiled knowingly. His mother explained in a stage whisper that his bride had departed just a few days before, after a visit of two months. She found great satisfaction in the thought that he preferred her courtyard to school, although he spent his time lying about, listlessly. We could hardly expect her to be otherwise. School to her was a vague institution somewhere outside, which had taken her son away from her. At last she had him again, and she was proud of her victory. His father scolded and fumed, but he was helpless against the indifference of the boy, supported by mother, aunts, and sister-in-law. An uncle's advice, coming from his own experience and observations, was finally accepted, "Drink plenty of milk, eat rich food and take life easy. Then after a year go back to school if you so desire." In the early days we were puzzled by the casual dropping of interests among boys who had shown ambition, and by the surprising awakening of youths whom we had accepted as indolent. Also in the families which we knew best, we observed that the older men were more progressive than their sons and younger brothers. We have learned now to read the signs, and know when a youth has emerged from the mud walls only for a respite, and when he has established himself amongst the men.

No matter how humble a man's position may be in village society, he becomes a personage when he enters his own courtyard. His wife, and any other women who are junior to him, are ready to do his bidding with heads bowed and voices subdued. To the young husband, this authority is most pleasing. He who has always been dependent upon others, suddenly finds a human being under his control, to be done with as he chooses. In exercising his newly acquired power he sometimes struts about like a young peacock. The women of the household laugh at him—behind their scarves. But outwardly they approve, and demand submission from his wife. One evening the Memsahiba was sitting with a group of outcaste women, busy making rag dolls. Voices were keyed high. We all raise our voices in the village, and are only aware of it when we suddenly hear ourselves shrilling in some dignified town bungalow, or hospital. On this occasion as the women were working and talking, there was a sudden hush. Over their heads came a prolonged scolding in a harsh, youthful voice. In the lantern light the Memsahiba saw Govind, who a year or two ago was a star at turning somersaults and at escaping from irate owners of pillaged sugar-cane fields. She was about to ask why the storm of abuse, and to tell him to move on, when she observed a selfconscious smile under the sheltering scarf of the girl at her side, Govind's bride. The older women nudged one another and giggled. The girl rose, head bowed as though she expected a whipping and hurried away, with Govind on her trail. After performing the trifling task to which he had so forcibly called her, she returned, all smiles. Her husband had played his role of master, and she the role of obedient wife, to their own satisfaction.

There is a temptation for these parts to be played indefinitely in the larger joint families where there is always an audience of aunts and sisters-in-law. Husband and wife have little opportunity for a natural relationship, except in their corner of the courtyard or roof under cover of darkness. Even this savours of the clandestine, as the husband is expected to sleep among the men at the front of the house. We have known successful joint-families in the city who have ensured privacy by providing a separate apartment for each of the smaller groups. But in the village this provision for comfort must be sacrificed to the practical needs of a farm household.

In these larger families it is almost impossible to detect real from fictitious fear of husbands, until one knows the individuals and hears the reactions of the women, when there are no men about. Whether or not fear exists, every woman looks up to her husband as her master. Be he kind or be he cruel, it is her duty to obey him. If he punishes her she accepts it like a naughty child. When the Memsahiba sympathized with a young Dhanukin (one of the outcaste groups) who displayed her wrists cut where her husband had broken her glass bangles while beating her, the Dhanukin showed no resentment toward her husband. And the other women teased her, because she had been caught in mischief—talking to her husband's elder brother. While they laughed and teased, the husband appeared and his wife leaned far over her bread board, playing effectively the part of a crushed spirit, while the other women scurried off to suddenly remembered tasks. When the Memsahiba remonstrated with him for his abuse of a faithful wife, he grinned tolerantly and explained that under the circumstances discipline was necessary. His surprise at the Memsahiba's interference reminded her of her own resentment that same morning when a village passer-by objected to her discipline of the small son who had just burned a hole in the office tent.

It would be unfair to the joint-family, which has much in its favour economically, to accuse it of disallowing love and companionship between husbands and wives. Such companionship is possible, and would be more general even in crowded households, if there were less emphasis on sex. As it is, a woman performs her duty to her husband, satisfying his elemental needs, while she lavishes more and more of her love on her children. In the smaller homes, where the walls surround a single family, there is much more natural relationship. With no older women present constantly to remind husband and wife of their respective roles, they work together for the good of their little family, without excessive consciousness of sex. In such courtyards, the wife may draw her scarf more closely over her face when her husband enters and do his bidding without question, but she is free to talk with him alone. Even while he eats and she stands nearby ready to supply his wants, she may tell him about the baby's latest prank. And while he washes and prepares to return to his work or to a visit with his neighbours, he complains to her of the lack of rain or the destruction by the deer in the farthest *arhar* field. Certain craftsmen work in their own courtyards with their wives, and sometimes their children, as assistants. In these households, we find none of the restrictions of families ruled by conservative mothers and aunts. The tailor and his wife, sitting in their little courtyard which faces "Humble Lane" without the usual protecting cattle room, are much too busy with their joint labours to think of the minutiae of sex conventions. Only occasionally does she remember to draw her scarf and assume a cringing attitude—when some older neighbour woman comments on her careless ways.

If a wife resents her husband's abuse of his control, as sometimes happens, she has a means of escape without scandal. As long as her father's house is maintained by one of her male relatives, she is free to return to it for visits of indefinite length. When the Memsahiba asked such a run-away wife what she would do if her husband came and demanded her return, the reply was that her brothers would not let him in. "But," she added, "He won't come—for a long time at least." When quarrels and blows have been forgotten, he may want her and she may be ready to return. They make a fresh start, with father's home in the offing as a final resort. The adjustment works out simply unless the husband has a mother who demands the services of his wife. Driven by his mother's importunity, he may insist on his wife's return. Or his mother may demand that her grandchild be left with her, and the young wife is torn between her child and escape from her husband's domination. Several years ago we were astonished when a village *panchayat* (committee of five) decreed that a young wife who had gone to her father's house, must give up her baby son to her mother-in-law, unless she herself was willing to return to her husband and his mother, whose cruelty was known to the *panchayat members*. Since living in the village we can better appreciate the *panchayat's* point of view. A child belongs to his father's family.

The child's mother may leave the household, but she has no right to take away the child.

A wife who is left a widow suffers greatly from her personal loss. But in our village she is not expected to perform the austerities demanded of widows in some communities. Her share of the work in a busy farm household is too great to permit leisure for time-consuming ceremonies. Very few of our widows shave their heads. Most of them wear only silver jewelry, having broken off their coloured bangles at the time of mourning. But some have retained these, and bear no outward mark of widowhood. In an ordinary household it is difficult to distinguish widows from their more fortunate sisters-in-law. After the first year, a widow in a joint-family goes on living and working much as she did before her husband's death, with the other men of the family as her protectors. If there are no survivors of her husband's family to shelter her, and she has no sons, she considers herself doubly cursed. The little old lady of tailor caste wrung our hearts when she told us of her homeless state. We pictured her sleeping by the side of the road, until to our amazement we found her comfortably housed—under the roof of her daughter's husband. This to her was no home, but a make-shift which fate had forced upon her. We have widows wretched in their poverty, but we know of only one who has been cast off, because she can no longer work. The widow with grown sons retains her position as dictator of the family courtyard. Her sons' wives yield to her authority, though not always without protest. We sometimes hear their voices rising over mud walls, for the benefit of neighbouring courtyards. Neighbours shrug and smile. To intrude in affairs between husband and wife is futile, but to interfere in a mother-daughter-in-law quarrel is to invite the oral obliteration of one's self, one's forebears and one's descendants.

The influence of the head of the woman's quarters must be taken into consideration if the women and children are to be helped. Progress can be made much more rapidly and happily, if her cooperation is won. The younger women may be more ready to adopt new suggestions for sanitation, but the consent of the chief is necessary before changes may be instituted. In most of our houses the older women are the staunch conservatives. At the same time they are lovable and friendly, and willing to listen if they are sure they are not being dictated to. Many a child's eyes have gone swollen and inflamed until the grandmother has been convinced that bathing and medicine will give it relief. When the Memsahiba wants to add milk to the unleavened cakes which constitute the diet of a child, she knows that she must appeal to the grandmother, if there is one present.

There are other women whose influence counts in the village, women who circulate through courtyards other than their own. If we are able to help a baby in one family, the news is carried by these women to other mothers in distress. Gossip of our camp goes and grows with their visits. Among them are the Kaharins who are employed to carry water from wells to the houses where the women observe purdah; the Kachhins who go into larger farm households to help with the splitting of pulses and grinding of grains; the wife of the washerman who collects and delivers clothes; and the sweeper women who go into most of the high caste households, to clean privies and drains. Most influential among them, because of her work and her tongue, is the barber's wife. While she massages a new mother or helps anoint a bridegroom with oil, she chooses appropriate bits from her store of gossip and philosophy. Much of her popularity depends on her questionable jokes and gibes at the recipient of her ministrations. Whenever the Memsahiba encounters her in the intimacy of a courtyard, she prepares for a lively siege of raillery. She retorts—until the barberess's vocabulary becomes too shady to be followed with comfort. The attitude of this sophisticated lady has weight among her wall-bound clients, and we have found her support exceedingly worthwhile.

When their thoughts and time are not centered on husbands and babies, our village housewives are occupied with food. With no furniture beyond unvarnished rope-laced cots and a low rope-laced stool, with their dishes limited to a small collection of beautiful brass utensils, and with most of their sewing done by men of tailor caste, one might conclude that their days are leisurely. But the preparation of food involves much more than goes on in a town courtyard. Their husbands come in loaded with produce from the fields, and the women do the rest. Paddy which is poured out on the floor, must be pounded till the husks are removed, before the rice can be prepared for cooking. The making of daily bread means the cleaning and storing of grain, as well as grinding it fresh in the stone mill before it can be kneaded and toasted. The spices which go into the pulse and vegetable dishes—and they are many—are freshly ground each day or two, with a stone roller upon a corrugated slab of stone. They churn the milk and later clarify the butter for cooking purposes. Since the Memsahiba undertook the task of preparing all of the dishes which appear in the village dietary, her respect for her village neighbours has grown. And her work covered only the final stages of production. The women have enjoyed her efforts and have been eager to share with her their own superior knowledge. The experience has added to their friendliness and understanding, and has increased our appreciation of their position in village society. The men may scorn their womenfolk, but they cannot scorn their ability as burden-sharers.

If a woman from the outside world comes into contact with these women of the village who are devoting their lives to their menfolk and children, she is granted a great privilege and responsibility—the privilege of knowing them and of observing their selfless service, and the responsibility of sharing her broader training with them. She is allowed to pass .inside the mud walls which bar men. In the family courtyards she can visit and share with women like our nearest neighbour, a young Brahman woman. Her house walls are joined on all three sides by the house walls of other castes. She has never seen the other Brahman women of the village, because she would have to cross a lane to get to them. And she only sees those women of lower castes who come into her courtyard as irregular helpers or those who may talk to her when she climbs to the top of her own wall and peers down into their courtyard. Her knowledge of the lanes and houses and families of the village comes to her through her small sons, and serving women. And beyond the village she knows only the road to her home village, seen through the holes in a carefully covered bullock cart. Railway trains pass a few miles away, but she has never seen one. She cannot read, and does not possess a book or picture. Her husband's younger brother has been married to her younger sister who will come soon to share the courtyard with her. Her only house guests are her husband's two sisters who come to the old home for visits of indefinite duration. She was terrified of us at first, but like the others, she finally called upon us when her troubles were beyond the help of exorcists and prescribers. Her husband and boys constantly brought her reports of our activities in camp and her fear faded with knowledge. Now she sends one of her sons over when she feels that she is being passed by, to remind the Memsahiba, "You are neglecting your friend." Until she and others like her are free to move beyond their own mud walls, some of us can bring the best of the outside world in to them. They are too intensely personal in their interests to care for any form of impersonal instruction. And in some fields their desire to learn is curtailed by superstitious control. But they welcome any knowledge which is not thus banned, and which comes to them through their own happy experiences with their own babies. When once they discover that by adopting a new attitude or method they can serve their loved ones better, they are eager pupils. We cannot expect them to maintain enthusiastic interest in instruction which moves only in one direction—from the visitor to themselves. Like the rest of us, they get more enjoyment and help from knowledge which evolves from an exchange, a sharing of thoughts and experiences. The visitor's contribution may come from extensive study. Theirs comes from intensive experience. And if we who come to serve them are prepared to listen as well as to teach we shall find that in exchange for our contribution from the outside world, they have much of value from their own severe schooling to share with us.

CHAPTER VII

THE YOUNGER GENERATION

Cheerfully unmindful of activities connected with the Study, our two small sons set about making friends in their own way. As soon as the village children recovered from the shock of our fair skin and hair, they ventured further and further across the road, and into our camp. They were free from misgivings as to our motives—and our play wagon and tricycle were alluring. A slight gesture of welcome brought them crowding about both cycle and wagon. And they were soon racing between our tents without stopping to think of fear. There was no noticeable difference in the approach of our boys to village children here, and their approach to American children whom they met for the first time in the hills. Each was true to his own form—Arthur, the elder, making his overtures with a shy smile, and Alfred, the younger, advancing with a punch. The difference lay in the response which they received. Warned by fearful parents, our little village friends assumed a deference which, had it survived, would have made natural play impossible. It did survive long enough for the punch to run riot, and put the bolder ones on the defensive, and the weaker ones to flight.

Any other barriers which parents may have introduced were too artificial to continue, in children. We still find mothers who try to force discipline with the threat, "The Sahib and Memsahiba will take you away if you do that again." We hear this less and less, however, and when it does slip out it has little effect on the child, and is rebuked by friendly parents and children nearby. The children know us and our family life too thoroughly to be impressed by any fabled terrors. Language was the most lasting handicap. The village boys expressed themselves in a flow of village Hindustani, and were surprised when their new friends could not understand. Our boys tried gestures and a mixture of tongues. The conglomerate effect so delighted the village children that they constantly invited buffoonery on the part of our two. We were not fully conscious of the language handicap until a full-fledged, English speaking, High School student appeared in the village. A few of our village boys had made a start in English, but only enough to warrant an occasional "good-night" and "Thank-you". This boy spoke it with ease, and always carried a hockey stick as patent of his advanced education. He came to get his wife, whose home is in our village. But he was so delighted at this opportunity for English practice that he stayed on, and came for subsequent visits to his in-laws, an unconventional proceeding in our village. When he and his hockey stick appeared in the grove, there was a shout from Arthur, "There's my friend," and an echo from Alfred, "my friend," as they rushed from play or meals to greet him. The apparent satisfaction found in a companionship without word constraint was revealing. Now that village-Hindustani flows more easily, the relationship with neighbour boys more nearly approaches that of "my friend." During his school holidays Arthur sits in our night class amongst village boys of his own age, reading and writing Hindi, a joint struggle which has greatly strengthened the naturalness of their attitude toward one another.

The friendship of the children has proved an asset on which we had not reckoned. The smaller boys and girls of the village wander wild and free, and serve as scouts and messengers for their shut-in mothers and field-bound fathers. From the beginning they have observed, and faithfully reported our household, office and dispensary activities, destroying the last vestiges of suspicion. When talking with men or women in the village, we are still entertained by graphic pictures of ourselves as the children see us, with laughable descriptions of our dish washing with soap and hot water, our bread, and our cutlery, or imitations of our tone and expression as we drive them from the tent door at rest time, or call out to them to "take turns" on the motor tire swing. Just as they report our doings within the village, they are eager to report to us any interesting village activities. They are much more sensitive to the excitement of activity than are their monotony-dulled parents. And they have urged us to every scene of activity sometimes trifling but often of value to a Study of village life. At other times while they hover about our desks, they are happy to lend their bit toward checking figures and facts. Their information is without prejudice and fairly dependable because of their free share in grown-up activities. Often in their heated arguments over some question which we have asked, they rouse in us doubtings which might have passed unstirred.

Best of all, through their play in our camp, they have made us aware of certain village attitudes which we would have been slow to recognize in our fragmentary observations of adult village life. Every child imbibes caste prejudice before he takes his first steps. Never does he permit himself to be touched by one of the sweeper children. And if in an unguarded moment he runs the risk of pollution, he is snatched to a zone of safety by a big sister or brother. In our grove the Bhangi children, whom we persistently call, and treat as Christians, enjoy privileges which are granted them nowhere else in the village. Caste youngsters resent this. But they have too much fun here to show their resentment by staying away. When a few small Christians get one of the wagons, they can monopolize it as long as they choose. No one dares go near enough to take it away. Once or twice caste children have attempted stone throwing, to exert long distance pressure, but stone throwing has been forbidden in our grove. A few days ago a small girl of "twice-born" heritage came to the Memsahiba with the complaint, "Banwari won't give me a turn at the swing." Banwari is

The girls of the family are his willing slaves

On rare occasions a group of Kahar youths appear in a series of short, racy dramas

the son of the Christian teacher-pastor and ranked as an Untouchable. At that moment Banwari raced off after one of his companions. The little girl saw her chance and snatched the swing. While she swung and sang serenely, Banwari returned with a rush. There was a shriek and a swirl of full skirts, as she leapt and fled, breathless, but saved from a touch of his outcaste hands or garments. Had he been a caste child she would have clung to the swing and fought for her place. Outcaste children other than Bhangis are not treated as Untouchables, but are constantly reminded of their station. If a child of higher caste orders one of them to pull him and his baby sister around in a cart, the small outcaste does it without demur. The same attitude exists in lesser degree, among those of serving castes. If a high caste boy comes to the tent door to look in or to talk to our boys, low caste children give way to him at once. One of our greatest problems with our own children has been the preservation in them of democracy. When they began playing with children of the village, a boy was a boy to them, and not a member of some particular class. They had not learned the first question which comes to a villager's lips on meeting a stranger—"Of what caste are you?" When caste boys came over, and found one of our boys busy digging a miniature well with a Christian, they tried to explain that this must not, could not, be done. They turned to us for arbitration. We tried to explain our attitude sympathetically. They had to be satisfied. They were in our camp. Since then, our boys have defended the Christians on occasions when the latter have been driven off, even to the point of teasing the caste children about their snobbishness. But they frequently yield to the call of the larger, more active group and skip gaily away from their loyalty to the oppressed.

It is very easy for boys the ages of our two to adopt the ways of the sons of village leaders. When once they experienced the sense of power over others, they found it pleasant enough to repeat. To one of Alfred's age, it is particularly satisfying. He knows what game he wants to play, and summons the children of lower castes to follow. Or he wants a ride in a cart, and lets them pull him indefinitely. If one of them resists, he applies his bat or bow, or anything at hand. And the unhappy victim flies to us for shelter. Arthur, the elder, with his longer periods in school among equals, prefers to play with the boys of higher caste with whom there is more give and take. We have our bullies, as we would have anywhere in a community of boys. But here power rests not so much with the physically strong, as with the socially high. And when the two qualifications are joined in one lad, then do the humble cower.

As we have watched the babies pass from short vests into loin cloths or full skirts, and have watched the older children being fitted into the pattern of grown up men and women, we have realized the meagreness of their childhood as compared with that of our own or other children protected from the burdens of adult life. Dumbir is slightly older than Arthur. When we first came, he was with us almost daily, delighting in every plaything and every detail of our life which he shared. Last year we missed him, until he passed through the grove herding goats. He was old enough to help, and was given almost a man's responsibility. Later his father lost his goats through debt and Dumbir was employed by another goatherd, and his duties increased. One day last year his elder brother came sobbing to our door. Beside him stood Dumbir silent, scared, propping up his right arm from which blood streamed and a piece of bone protruded. He had fallen from a tree while breaking off dead branches for firewood. We hurried him to the hospital where he was obliged to remain almost a month. We visited him whenever we were in town and found him eager as ever to see and enjoy. We took him with us to the shops and to services in the chapel opposite the hospital, where he sat open-eyed and open-mouthed. His only complaint during the prolonged stay was that he was failing to earn his daily bread. This winter he tried to come to our night school but had to work too late to get here. Whenever he can, he brings his goats our way, and snatches a few moments of play on the swing or tricycle. Meanwhile Arthur's childhood has changed but little. He has out-grown coloured suits and gone into khaki, has passed through several grades at school, and become a Cub. The burden of earning daily bread is still far from him.

Lakshmi was as free in our grove as the squirrels.

Everyone deferred to her, as daughter of the head of the village. When the girls played games by themselves, she was always given first turn and never allowed to lose. She was one of the few girls permitted to attend school, and went racing past with the boys on her way home to a hurried lunch. We found her so lovable that we spoiled her as much as the rest. Last year we saw less and less of her, and this year she comes only for treatments of a troublesome ear. She comes shyly, self-consciously, drawing her scarf over the side of her face toward the Sahib, with whom she has always been on natural, friendly terms. The reason is that Lakshmi is about to be married. She sits demurely among the women, or busies herself with her baby sister, and her nephews and nieces, hearing about the search for a suitable husband and the great preparations for her wedding. Her father has told us that he intends to take advantage of the recently enacted Sarda bill in postponing her marriage. Judging from past experiences, his more conservative brother and the women of the household, will admit no such unorthodox procedure, and will take advantage of the intervening months, before the law comes into effect.

Shanti, living just across the road from our camp, in the outcaste section of the village, is slightly younger than Lakshmi, and was equally attractive until smallpox left her blind. Now one eye ball protrudes from between the lids and the other has almost disappeared. She is a loyal little Christian, joyfully singing the bhajans and re-telling the stories which we have taught her. We arranged for her to attend a school for blind girls. But at the last moment her parents refused to let her go. "Her mother will cry if she has to part with her," was the only excuse her father could offer. As we learned more of the work of the blind school, the more we wanted Shanti to share its advantages. Repeatedly her parents said that they were ready to let her go, and then found some need for her at home. Later it was made known that they were afraid of losing any stray opportunity of marrying her off. Their greatest obligation to her was to find a husband, a difficult undertaking with her disfigurement. All of our plans were unessential as compared with this paramount duty. Over a year ago we were told that a husband had been found. We remonstrated. The engagement was postponed, not on account of our objections, but because the prospective husband was sent to jail for stealing. Again we hoped, and Shanti whispered that now school might be possible. But a prospective son-in-law, even though in jail, was not to be ignored. And Shanti waited. She asked the Memsahiba to teach her a prayer that would help her husband. And she is troubled at the prospect of the treatment which she, a bungling wife, will receive. We have given up hope of working through her parents, who have avoided the teacher-pastor and ourselves except when favours are to be granted. Our hope rests in the desire of her husband to have a wife whose hands are useful though her sight is gone, Shanti, like Lakshmi, has changed from a care-free child to a little woman during the past two years. But the constant reminders of the troubles she is causing her parents, and the insecurity of her future position have brought more seriousness and resignation into her life.

One by one the boys and girls in Arthur's age group have been called to do their share toward family support. We find them at work as we go through the fields, guiding the streams of water that flow in from the irrigation ditches, herding the cattle, driving the bullocks which draw the water bags up from the wells, or working beside their fathers at the craft of their particular caste. Everyone is too busy to teach them anything beyond the labour associated with daily bread. They see no books, and in their leisure evenings during slack seasons, they hear nothing beyond village gossip and occasional singing. They race over to us whenever they are free, to catch a glimpse of the outside world through their tireless questions, or to beg a short ride on the motor if they hear it start, or perhaps to play a game of *kabaddi* by moonlight.

When the girls leave our grove, they go to stay—in their own or neighbouring courtyards, and later in the homes of their husbands in other villages. When they return for a visit, they send one of the children to call the Memsahiba, to come to them. Our grove is too public for them to come to us.

The changes in Alfred's age group, though not so momentous, are surprising. Once a Mainpuri friend passed on to us an old saying, "Treat your son as a rajah until he is five, as a slave until he is fifteen, and then as a friend." The change which occurs in the neighbourhood of five seems to concur with this. Babies who were riding around on sisters' hips and lying on the ground and screaming for what they wanted, are now faithful nurses of younger sisters and brothers, or nieces and nephews. Boys who had room made for them on one of the wagons by older children, are now themselves fighting for places for someone younger. Little girls who howled if someone did not give them mud carts, are now industriously making them for some smaller person. Sarmani, of six, helps her mother every morning, before going out to play, and when she goes, it is almost always with her baby brother riding her hip—because he refuses to let mother do her work. When baby brother's eyes are red, she gravely presents him at the dispensary tent for treatment and holds him more courageously than her mother could. When she follows us around, begging for something, it may be a picture or a pencil for herself that she wants, but more often she is persuading us that her baby brother needs stockings or a rattle or the ink bottle which has just been emptied. Watching our children has awakened in her a desire for something beyond playthings of paper and clay, the bits of broken clay jars, and grass bracelets and rings which are all that village children have. And whatever she wants is for her small brother, rather than for herself.

The young men of the village, though too grown up to be interested in the activities of our children, are not too dignified to take a turn on a slide or a bat at the ball when they are free from the almost constant grind of field work. At Christmas time we have one afternoon of sports for them, and they come hurrying in early from their fields. They go into the races and games with ardour,—and are as excited over the prize giving as the smaller boys. In spite of their regular, heavy toil, they are unused to sports, and go limping about their work for several days afterwards. Last year we introduced the high jump. They were unwilling to try it because it was new, until the Sahib went over, followed by Kishore, the grey haired village clown.

Our sports day in which all share is a new experience for most of them. In their own amusements the performers are few and the audience large. During the hot weather, there are wrestling matches in which the goldsmith brothers star. On certain rare occasions a group of Kahar youths appear in a series of short racy dramas. In connection with big weddings there are nautches and perhaps a play enacted by a travelling troupe. Once a year there is the big Fair on the outskirts of Mainpuri which gives them a few days of concentrated excitement. And at about the same time comes the Holi festival in which they run riot. These and the dramatic ceremonies associated with other scattered religious festivals, are the extent of their recreation. During the rest of the year they are engulfed by work.

The boys of humble caste take up the traditional work of their fathers, without questioning the attractiveness of their work or their own fitness for it. It is theirs to do, and they accept it. The boys of high caste—Brahmins, in our village—have had a little more schooling and are not so content to follow their fathers as slaves of the fields. They are restless until routine finally takes the edge from their desire for change. One of these is Surgan who might have gone on to High School had he not spent his time and money in gambling. He is married. He and his wife live in his father's house. And he is dependent on his father for employment, food, clothing and housing. His appetite for gambling often leads him to borrow money from his aunts or to steal some of his father's grain. Twice he has run away from home, but not beyond reach. Now when he threatens to leave, the women of the family send for the Memsahiba and beg her, for their sakes, to produce some interest that will hold him in the village. The Memsahiba looks at his young wife, pretty in spite of her pock marks, and wonders why he needs more than her attractions. It is difficult to find work that he, a Brahman, is willing to do. We suddenly remember that we must add to our collection of stories and songs, and employ him during his spare time. He earns enough to pay back his importunate aunts and to buy something for his wife, while enjoying the importance of being an individual. And the crisis is past, temporarily. His father needs his help in his scattered fields, and is distressed lest his son desert him. And yet, after administering a beating, he expresses the desire that the boy might go out and get his fill of the world and return, thankful for the protection and advantages of the paternal home.

Another Brahman youth returned to the village last year after completing the work of the 8th Standard in Mainpuri. He has gone further in school than anyone else in the village. He is one of several sons, and it was his father's ambition, as well as his own, that he find some remunerative clerkship, beyond the boundaries of Karimpur. No post has offered itself, and the boy sits in front of his father's storehouse or passes his time doing odd jobs, disgruntled, dissatisfied. He will not throw himself into farm work, because he is always hoping for some opportunity which he has learned to regard as superior. We have put him in charge of our night school, and he has enjoyed the experience, although he confessed a few days ago that it has convinced him that he does not want to take a teacher's training course. Another boy of the same caste group attended the Mission School in Mainpuri for a year after finishing the 3rd Standard in the village school. He did not enjoy school restraints, and his widowed mother made it possible for him to go to Calcutta to work. This was a real adventure. Last spring when the Memsahiba was bound for Calcutta, his mother implored her to bring him back. After a futile search in the labyrinths of Calcutta lanes, the Memsahiba returned with no news of him—to find that he had just come home, in time to take part in the Holi festivities. He remained at home for some months, unwilling to relieve his mother of her worries over fields which it was almost impossible for her to supervise as a *purdahnashin*. He finally attached himself to the Pundit of a petty rajah not far away, and is trying to study Sanskrit. Weekly, he threatens to leave. But his mother is proud of his association with a learned man, and is counting on her younger son to take charge of her fields. The latter's education is being limited to what our village school has to offer.

In families such as these, our loyalty is divided. We appreciate the feelings of the parents who have always taken for granted that their sons will succeed them, or will restore the family to its old standing, far above manual labour. And we sympathize with the sons who do not know what place there is for them in the town, and who hold back from the unrelieved monotony of village life. We once heard a disappointed American mother advise a younger mother of four sons living on a farm, "If you want to keep your boys here, don't send them to a University." The same warning might have been given in our village, with "town school" substituted for University. The boys who know nothing beyond village routine are content. Those who have gone to school are restless. They have disassociated learning from the work which their fathers have to offer them, and they have glimpsed a life full of interesting activity and tempting variety. It is for them that we want school masters who will raise farming from its old standing of drudgery to a position of interest and honour in the curriculum. And it is for them and their younger brothers and sisters that we would encourage a new rural life with a share of the recreation, the literature and the art now limited to the towns. And most difficult of all, we want only the best without those clutterings of sophisticated town life which would destroy simplicity of living.

We acknowledge that such a program demands skilful building. It is remote from that which now holds fast in the village and not at all like that which we find in the town. But the possibilities are there. Its attainment calls for rural teachers and other servants of society with training and attitude far different from that of the two men who are now the only link between the world of science and culture, and the village. These two drone faithfully through the alphabet and sums with our boys and girls, and as soon as school is over, they lock the iron gate and trudge home to their own village two miles away. It demands men who are statesmen, fortified with all the skill and the facts which education can offer. For they will have to deal with parents who are convinced that the present régime is the safest for their boys and girls, and who have fixed ideas of what farming, and education, and social life should be. They will have to convince leaders that the advantages which they want for their own sons are available within the village. And they will have to persuade these same leaders that other boys of humble origin should have equal opportunities with their own sons. There are plenty of difficulties—enough to challenge the best which ambitious youth with the advantages of education is willing to share with the equally worthy but less favoured youth of the village. They who are ready, and equipped to meet the challenge, will be welcomed enthusiastically by our boys who are restlessly searching for they know not what, and more gradually by the boys who are now content but who rejoice over the advent of anything new and helpful. And they will find quiet support amongst those parents who are ambitious for their sons but who are restrained by the old order.

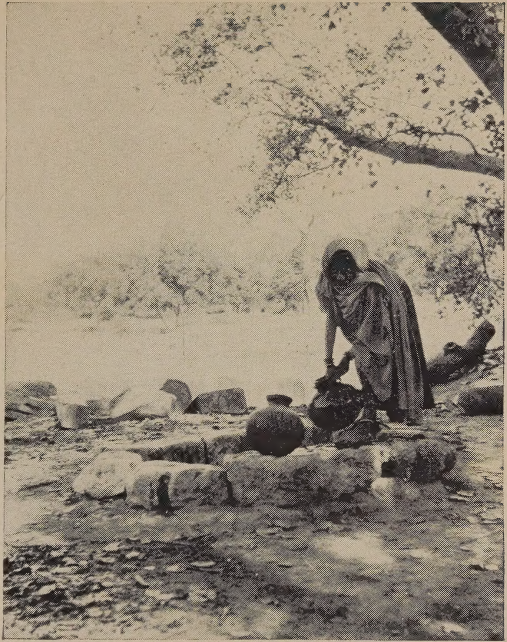
CHAPTER VIII

AGENTS OF AUTHORITY

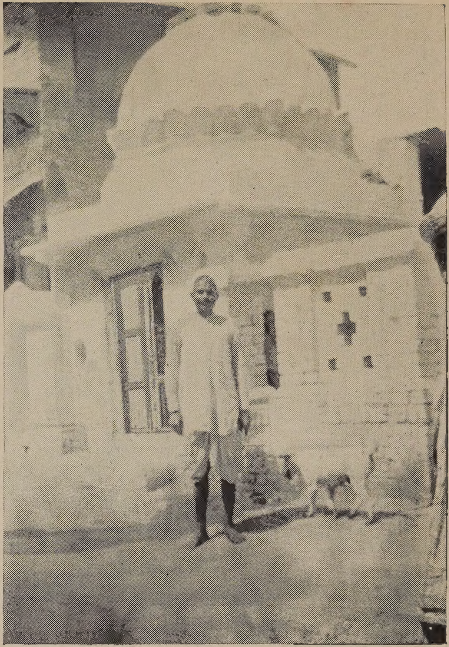
When a villager approaches our tent looking burdened and distressed, we are pretty sure that either someone is suffering at home—his bullock, his child, or his wife—or some agent of authority is on his trail. If the cause of his trouble is illness, we can express our sympathy in immediate action. If it is an agent, we can sympathize. But we have learned the difficulty of seeking justice in such cases. We might as well try to help the farmer rescue his field from a storm of hail or a swarm of locusts. When a clever agent makes use of a villager to further his own ends, he takes care to leave no trace of his activity other than the straitened circumstances and the bitterness of his victim. It is the story of the unscrupulous strong taking advantage of the ignorant weak, which might be heard anywhere. One would judge from the titles and duties of these agents that they were here simply to serve as links between the village, and officials or land-owners. But the villager has learned to his sorrow that the chief interest of most of them is their own profit and that of certain men directly above them. Their offices of trust are used to gain a formidable hold over the villagers whom they nominally serve.

The office of village head-man is honorary. He is a resident of the village, appointed by Government to represent the village in all matters pertaining to authority. He knows the village and the history of every individual in it better than any official could hope to, and is in a position to give useful information regarding offenders against the law. The man usually selected as head-man is an outstanding leader. And his established leadership added to the weight of his testimony as official spokesman for the village makes it possible for him to demand bribes from innocent men who will pay to save themselves the consequences of false charges and from offenders who will pay to protect themselves against true charges. Also, he has opportunities of winning privileges for himself and his friends through men of low official standing, if he is ready to share with them the spoils of his powers. Fortunately for Karimpur, our head-man has not, to the best of our knowledge, yielded to the tempting proposals made to him. He is interested in his farming, the lending of grain and money, and his religious observances. And he regards the office of head-man as just one more set of duties to be performed. He gives space on his *baithak*—the broad, unroofed verandah of packed earth before his storehouse, where men may work or lounge—to the Government accountant and his assistant. The village watchmen report any possible cases to him. The police constable stops to see him while on his beat, to share the latest bits of police news, and if possible to add something from Karimpur. If a supervising officer visits the village, he directs the head-man to call offenders to his *baithak* for interviews. When some petty officer wants clarified butter, fuel or labour for wedding festivities, the request is brought to the head-man, who is expected to supply whatever is demanded, from amongst his neighbours. Or some other official's servant may tell him to procure a load of fodder for his master's animals from time to time. For fear of displeasing the official who is supposed to have ordered the fodder, the head-man takes the required amount from one or two farmers and gives it to the servant. The servant charges his master for the load, and keeps the money. While our head-man tries to improve the condition of his people, by digging wells and making loans at fair rates, he is called upon to drain the village for the comfort of outsiders. And this he has resented to the point of threatening to resign on several occasions.

His unwillingness to take advantage of opportunities for extortion has often irritated those who would profit by his connivance. A year ago a farmer boy fell into the well from which he was drawing the big leather bag of water. He was pulled out at once, while someone came to call us. The Sahib took him into the Mainpuri hospital, in the hope that he might be saved. But his skull had been fractured when he struck the stone side of the well. He died that night. His relatives brought him home and came to us early the next morning to ask if it would be all right for them to follow the usual custom of im-



A girl of Kahar caste drawing water for her mistress who dwells in purdah



With the accountant is a record of every plot of land within the village revenue area

mediate cremation. In their dread of offending the law, they wanted us to take the responsibility, which the Sahib unwittingly did. He saw no reason for delaying the cremation as the case had been handled by the Assistant Medical Officer in the District hospital, where all accident cases are immediately reported to the police. In the afternoon a police officer appeared, irate that the body had been burned before he was able to make the required investigation. And he involved the head-man in the case by pointing to a section of the Government rules for head-men which stated that the body of anyone meeting an unnatural death must be shown to the police before burning. The rules were in Urdo, in Persian character, which neither the head-man nor any other villager could read. The infuriated police officer warned the head-man that he would fare better if he would consult the village police watchman in such cases. Later it evolved that the watchman had worked out a scheme whereby it could be proved, at least sufficiently to terrify the relatives of the boy, that he had been thrown into the well. He took for granted that the relatives would not dare burn the body until they had been granted police permission to do so. And he knew that custom forbade them to bathe or eat until after the cremation. He counted on their fasting and waiting beside the unembalmed body all night and through the heat of the day, to reduce them to a state of mental paralysis. By the time the police officer arrived late in the afternoon, with word that they had been charged with murder they would have been ready to add or pay whatever he demanded. Anything to save themselves from such a charge, and anything to pacify him so that they might proceed with the cremation. As it was, they were bathed and fed, and ready to face the obviously invented charge in a normal frame of mind. The head-man with our amateur support had frustrated the plan. The villagers conjectured that our blunder had saved the Kachhi family between seventy-five and a hundred rupees. The murder theory was not suggested to the head-man again. He like ourselves knew the harmlessness of this particular family in which the accident occurred, a family of simple farmer folk who would not take the life of a rat and certainly not the life of a member of their own family. Moreover, as a farmer, he knew the economic value of a boy of fourteen, entering his most useful years. To associate such a death with deliberate murder was the work of mischievous minds with which he could not fraternize.

The two village watchmen, representatives of the police in the village, receive an honorarium of three rupees a month. This is to reimburse them for their fortnightly trips to headquarters with their reports of births and deaths, and any occurrences of interest to the police department. It is taken for granted that they carry on their usual activities as farmers or tradesmen. One of the watchmen, an Untouchable, has little ambition either financial or social, and is content to live on his honorarium supplemented by trifling donations and the earnings of his wife. The other, an outcaste of slightly higher standing, first gave us the impression that his police duties occupied his full time, and that he was poorly paid for his arduous labours. But as we observed his activities, we found them to be of his own making and for his own benefit. He was associated with a small group of men of means and influence in the village, in an alliance which was able to bring any villager to their terms, or to ruin. A complaint of his abuse of office was forwarded to one of the landlords who recommended that his land agent take steps toward the watchman's dismissal. The steps were not taken. After an interim of quiet, the watchman renewed his activities, specializing on the men who had pressed for his removal. Each case was so petty that in itself it seemed childish. And yet an accumulation of such cases was exhausting the savings and patience of farmers. The plight of Lakhan, a farmer by caste, is fairly illustrative. He was cutting grain, and his wife was gleaning. The watchman came to him and announced, "Someone has broken your lock. Report the theft." Lakhan ran home, found his lock broken, but nothing touched in his house, He was unwilling to report a theft for fear of being trapped. Whereupon the watchman threatened to make a charge against him at police headquarters for withholding information from the police. The only thing that could dissuade him from making the report was fifty rupees. Lakhan raised the fifty rupees—enough to buy a bullock, or a milch animal. Then the watchman threatened Lakhan's neighbours, saying that they would be accused of theft if they did not give him something. Six frightened farmers, never far from starvation each gave him money, ranging from three to eight rupees; and six others gave him head loads of grain, to induce him not to take them to police headquarters.

Our watchman is a skilled opportunist. One day a Mohammedan landlord and a friend rode near one of the hamlets within the area of our village. They were hunting, and had no interest whatever in the people. But the watchman hurried importantly to the house of a farmer, reporting that the relative then visiting him had committed some wrong and that two high police officers had come to arrest him. The farmer, peering from his door, saw two imposing individuals sitting in an ekka—a high, two-wheeled cart—not far from his house. The watchman assured him that for one hundred rupees he could persuade the officers to leave the relative alone. The farmer was able to satisfy his demands with seventy rupees, and breathed a sigh of relief when he dared look out again and found the strangers gone.

On another occasion, a Brahman boy struck the washerman's daughter while the two were gathering grain from a field shared by their two families. The girl came home crying, and told her tale to everyone she met, including the head-man. When the boy passed on his way home the head-man stopped and rebuked him for striking the girl, and the affair was dropped—but not by the watchman. Shortly afterwards he appeared at the boy's home with a police constable displaying a supposed warrant. He stated that the boy was reported as having assaulted the girl with evil intent. The father, who with his son, was always at work in his fields, was bewildered by this sudden attack. His neighbour, one of the village elders, advised him to quiet the affair by paying the fifty rupees demanded. He paid. But, sure of the falseness of the charge, he said that he would accompany the constable to the head office in Mainpuri and see that the proper officer received the money. When they neared the office, the constable told the old man to wait for him a moment while he stepped into his house to see his wife. He disappeared, and did not return. The old farmer, realizing that he had been fooled, went on to the police office. No one there knew what he was talking about, and he was put out as a troublesome old man. The villagers have accounted for the fifty rupees thus—twenty stayed with the constable, fifteen went to the watchman who utilized the opportunity, and fifteen to the village elder who advised the farmer to pay the amount. Incidentally, the head-man was rebuked for settling the case quietly as he did. The police implied that he was trying to hush something which should have been put into their hands. The agents who concoct such schemes are careful to avoid tangible evidence. And they know that the word of an agent is accepted in the District court in preference to that of a villager, in case an exposure is attempted. They have no intention of writing such petty but profitable cases up, in the report book at police headquarters. Hence higher officials who must depend on records, have no means of investigating them. The watchman continued to apply himself to these and similar questionable activities until a group of farmers asked our help. A statement was prepared for the Superintendent of Police of the District, signed by thirty men who dared face the consequences of the watchman's wrath showing how threats of charges of rascality, adultery, gambling, disturbance of the peace, dacoity, or sheltering bad characters, had been brought to bear upon them to make them pay varying sums of money. They presented the statement in person, accompanied by the landlord's agent. At this juncture the Superintendent of Police was being transferred and could only arrange for a temporary dismissal of the watchman. Shortly afterwards the Sahib was taken to the Hills, ill with enteric. And the watchman, with tears of self-pity, assurances that the claims against him were false, and the help of the men directly over him, managed to be reinstated by the new Superintendent at the end of his recess. He returned with threats of revenge to be visited upon the men who had exposed him, one of them a member of his alliance. But warnings from higher official headquarters have turned his activities to farming, at least temporarily.

The village Patwari, or accountant, and his one assistant, are the only full time agents of Government in the village. With the accountant is a record of every plot of land within the revenue area of

Karimpur, what is grown on it, the names of the holders of it, and their individual rights in it. He enters in his volumes, any changes brought about by death, with a statement of the rights of each heir. He notes transfers of holdings, and any alterations in legal rights. Also, he keeps a record of all rents paid to each landlord, and arrears. He must appear in court to give evidence in all cases dealing with land rights in his area. If more of our farmers could read, and if each of them would keep his own authorized copy of the record of his holdings made out by the Settlement Officer every thirty years, along with legal records of current transactions, our accountant would serve as an inoffensive clerk. But as long as they do not do this and depend entirely on his annual recording of their rights they vest him with powers which he, a low-grade clerk could hardly be expected to disregard. Just as they leave their fields unprotected, and are perturbed when men and animals trespass, so they expose their treasured land rights to his avarice, and are upset when he takes advantage. The degree to which any village accountant exceeds his duties, depends upon his aspirations. And ours is evidently among the more ambitious.

His opportunities for extortion lie in the juggling of names when each year he rewrites in detail the voluminous land records. A grove is shared by three or four men. The accountant threatens to drop the name of one of them from the list. Rather than risk sacrificing his rights, the unfortunate one agrees to pay whatever the accountant demands. Such an omission of his name may be tragic for a farmer, if repeated over a period of years, because the omission thereby is legalized. And the possibilities of its detection amidst the masses of records are slim. Once when such a discrepancy was noted by an examining officer the accountant blamed the carelessness of his assistant.

An old man is anxious that his nephew's name be entered in the records, as heir to his fields. The accountant neglects to make the desired entry until the uncle is desperate enough to pay the fifty rupees demanded, or, when the accountant's evidence is required in a case, he finds some excuse for not giving it, until the men who need it come to his terms. One group of men fighting for rights to land which a family division had scattered, have reported paying him two hundred rupees for his evidence. And he is worrying them for one hundred more. If there is a misunderstanding over field boundaries, and the farmers consult the accountant's records, he demands at least one rupee from each questioner, for his trouble. This, in spite of the fact that his records are supposed to be accessible to those whose land is recorded. Recently, a question arose concerning certain fields which are sometimes fully and sometimes partially submerged in rainy seasons, and therefore only occasionally sown. As the village youth who acts as our clerk was involved, the Sahib was asked to accompany the accountant and the farmers, to the fields in question. With the aid of land maps and the accountant's records, they settled the difficulty easily.

But before they were finished, a crowd of farmers had collected, to ask the accountant for information regarding a number of other boundaries. Disputes had gone on for a long time over some of these boundaries, simply because the only accurate records were in the hands of the accountant and they were unwilling to pay him the irregular fee which he would demand for explaining the records to them. And the farmers now took advantage of the Sahib's presence, to secure the facts which were supposed to be at their disposal. And the accountant though obviously annoyed, was obliged to give the desired information needed to end the disputes.

A widow, in order to pay a debt, made a five year transfer of her property to a wealthy grain lender. Having no other income in the village she went away to visit relatives. Before the five years were up, the grain lender paid the accountant fifty rupees, and the land was transferred to his name. When the woman returned at the end of five years and claimed her land, she was informed that it was no longer hers. The accountant justified the transfer on the grounds of a rumour that she had remarried, and thus forfeited her rights. With the help of friends she took the case to court. Her land was given back to her, and the accountant was reprimanded. The grain lender shifted all responsibility for the doubtful transaction to the accountant, as the latter could not safely report the fifty rupees which the grain lender had paid him.

When the accountant finds himself thus exposed, he defends his activities by passing the blame on to others. He reminds his neighbours that he is obliged to collect enough money to pay the officer immediately over him eighteen rupees a year—the equivalent of one month of his salary. (The scale of pay for a Patwari is rupees fourteen per month rising to rupees eighteen per month.) Also, he must support his family in a manner worthy of his post. Both he and his brother are accountants. Frequent appearances before well dressed officials require a higher standard of dress than that of the average villager. And frequent calls to distant headquarters necessitate the provision of a horse which needs to be fed. Constant association with higher grade officials creates a desire to give sons better educational opportunities. Daughters must be married into homes with more advanced standards. All of these make financial drains. It is small wonder that they take advantage of their opportunities. The two brothers who served consecutively as Patwari of our village, maintain a joint household which is more like the stronghold of a prosperous money and grain lender than the home of low paid clerks. The stores of grain, the animals, the jewelry of the women, everything betokens wealth far beyond that of the people whom they serve. When there was a wedding in their family, we were entertained lavishly. Among other things we were struck by the long line of bullock carts which brought the bridegroom's party from the railway station, six miles to the accountant's village home. This was in our early days, and we were impressed by this show of neighbourliness. Later we learned that our friends, the farmers, were not there with their carts voluntarily. Fear of the displeasure of the accountant had led them to carry out his proposal that they make the procession an imposing one. One agent of authority in defending the practices of his fellow officers, said, "Some of our superior officers are very critical of our dress and appearance, and complain that we are not worthy of our office. They offer us no increase of pay. Yet we have to smarten up. We adjust ourselves to the standards of such an office, when along comes another who objects to our dress which he knows cannot be maintained on our low pay. What are we to do?"

During our stay in Karimpur we have had opportunity to get acquainted with the Patwari family. The younger brother who was accountant when we arrived, was transferred because he was unwilling to obey the standing order for accountants and make his residence in Karimpur. He insisted upon living in his ancestral home two miles away. However, the brothers were able to keep Karimpur, which is reputed to be a lucrative area, in the family. The elder brother succeeded the younger. He was equally successful in using the villagers to increase the prosperity of his family. But he finally became involved as a receiver of stolen goods, and was dismissed. Karimpur has offered very little sympathy. The elder brother always looked down on simple village folk, and wasted little time in winning their loyalty. He saw greater strength and security in cultivating the favour of men higher up. And he succeeded in making himself quite useful. With a superior behind him, in a position to sit in judgment on most complaints registered against him, he could go farther in his irregular use of office than he would otherwise have done. But he had not reckoned on the transfer of officers. A friendly superior was transferred before he was able to do all of the necessary straightening out. And he found himself without a job.

Only two landlords, both absentee, control the property of Karimpur. Each sends his agents—clerks and accountants—several times each season to collect rents and settle disputes within their jurisdiction. Because of responsibilities for wider areas, their interest in Karimpur is not as localized as that of the Government accountant. Their visits are too infrequent to enable them to settle many of the disputes that exist among the tenants; but not too infrequent to enable them to take advantage of the gullibility of these same tenants, when opportunity offers. On the receipt forms of one landlord is a printed statement that nothing above the actual rent is to be paid to the rent collector. The collector takes one anna for each receipt he gives out. And some farmers must pay this on seven or eight receipts for different holdings. In addition he exacts one rupee from each tenant. If a farmer refuses to pay this, his receipt is made out short of the full payment. A small friend of ours, looking after the interests of his widowed mother, brought his incomplete receipt to us distressed because he was too small to oppose the agent. He could read, and knew what had been done.

Farmers who cannot read, treasure such receipts and are agitated too late—when faced with the penalty of accumulated arrears. Several worried tenants persuaded the Sahib to send a letter to the landlord on their behalf. In this he quoted the statement on the receipt. The landlord sent a supervising officer to investigate. He settled the case to his own satisfaction by reminding the tenants of their benefits received, such as wood for implements, and grazing facilities. And he suggested that they give the rent collector a present of something extra as an expression of their gratitude. Since then, further complaints of the demands of this particular collector have come. But knowing the attitude of the men whom he represents there seems no chance of redress.

The other landlord has recently doubled the pay of all of his employees, in the hope of removing the custom of *nazarana* (a fee or present given by tenants when visited by a landlord or some other superior person). Through this practice the landlord's agent realized from four hundred to five hundred rupees yearly from the tenants, taking one rupee from each tenant. About two years ago the Zamindar raised his pay from twenty-five rupees plus ten rupees, horse allowance, to forty-five rupees plus fifteen rupees, horse allowance, and issued instructions to all tenants that the practice of giving *nazarana* should cease. And it has. The Zamindar has proved his willingness to put a stop to demands made by his agents on tenants. Unfortunately his residence is two days' cart journey from Karimpur and there is little likelihood of complaints reaching his ears.

Even the *chaprasis*, farmers of the village called upon occasionally to carry out instructions of the rent collectors, utilize their position. A few weeks ago, one of them demanded a large blanket of home spun wool from a shepherd, as recompense for the grazing privileges granted by his landlord. The blanket was not wanted for the landlord in accordance with the *Wajib-ularz* (the customs of the village), but to be kept for himself. Another recently brought pressure to bear upon the new washerman who had been called to the village. The new man took for granted that as village washerman he would occupy the washerman's house. But the landlord's *chaprasi* stepped in and announced that he, the *chaprasi*, must be paid something, quietly, before he would allow the washerman to occupy the house, which was in his keeping. The washerman refused, and was temporarily located in a house belonging to the other landlord. Pressure was brought to bear on the *chaprasi* by the elders of the village and he reluctantly gave the washerman possession of the desired house.

If one were to accept the complaints of villagers as final, he would conclude that the acting agents were responsible for all abuses of office. If this were so, their removal would be the cure for all irregularities. But it is not as simple as this—while ignorance and superstition remain to encourage misuse of power. A young Indian official who happened to be visiting us when the village watchman was at his worst, expressed his view thus: "If you were to take one of the most harmless men in your village and put him in the watchman's place, he would be a rascal within six months." This may be extreme. But it would be difficult to find men willing to serve in these petty offices who would be above the temptations which now prevail. The sense of power and sudden popularity among leaders which a man experiences on finding himself no longer an ordinary member of society, but an agent of some outside authority, is in itself a danger. If he tests the new power, and finds that he does not inspire fear, he may be content to perform his duties without further ventures. But if he finds his neighbours easily intimidated, and if his personal ambition or the subtle suggestions from village leaders or from men higher up urge him on, he repeats his assertions of power until he becomes a hardened tyrant. Extortion and other abuses follow, until the original duties of his office are incidental to the more alluring and profitable, though precarious activities.

Illiterate, ignorant of their rights, dominated by the fear of the known and of the unknown, our more simple minded villagers are an invitation to oppression. And they are the ones who suffer most from the tyranny of unscrupulous agents. They who find it most difficult to meet the demands of their families and creditors, are pressed down by the added burden of extortion.

On the other hand, there are the men accustomed to lead, fairly well informed as to their rights, and well acquainted with the tactics necessary to increase their own wealth and power. They may still fear the unknown but they are too sophisticated to be awed by the under officers of authority whom they meet in the village. Instead, they use these agents to serve their own ends. With the simple minded farmer, the accountant is the one who takes the initiative, in threatening to change the records. But the leaders, they are the ones who make the overtures, to the accountant. They offer to pay him liberally if he will change the records to their benefit. If the change goes undetected, their gain is beyond the payment they have given him. If it is detected, they quietly watch him suffer the blame, knowing that he cannot safely acknowledge the acceptance of bribes. The representatives of the police in the village, are still more accessible as tools of the powerful. Being of outcaste origin, they take for granted that they are to follow the bidding of leaders. The latter need no arguments to establish their right to dictate. The result has been that on several occasions our original condemnation of agents has had to be transferred to more clever men behind them. And where clever leaders and clever agents are combined, they are a menace to simple, self-respecting, all-fearing villagers.

With these two groups of villagers tempting him from opposite directions, the agent is encouraged in his abuse of office. His knowledge of their common weaknesses leads him to flout the risk of exposure. He knows that wise or gullible, each man thinks of the interests of his own family, without consciousness of responsibility for the community. He also knows that like himself, the favour of any one of them can be won by the promise of some return favour. He plays on their distrust of each other. If several villagers agree that they will assert their rights and expose the wrong doings of an agent on the next provocation, the agent has very little to fear. When the provocation comes each man fears that the others may be afraid to act and will leave him standing alone against the agent. Knowing that he dare not face the consequences of standing alone, he does what he thinks the others are doing—and suffers in silence. It was only when a group of men were so pressed that they must either expose the village watchman or leave their homes, that they publicly announced their oppression. After reaching this point it required further time and courage for them to commit themselves by affixing their thumb impressions as signatures to a written statement. As long as an agent can manipulate his activities so as not quite to drive farmers over the desperation line, he knows that he is safe from exposure.

Removal of acting agents will not relieve our village friends from oppression, while existing conditions are maintained. On the side of the villagers there is needed education, not only cultural and industrial, but education in legal rights and still more in community responsibilities. They have not yet learned that as long as each of them works for favours for his own family, regardless of its cost to a fellow villager, they will play into the hands of the unscrupulous. On the side of the agents, there is needed a definite understanding as to sources of income. If the authority represented, be it Government or landlord, regards the salaries of agents as only partial payment to be supplemented by funds collected from those served, misunderstandings are unavoidable. This is obviously the intention of one of our landlords, and obviously not the intention of the other. Our *chaukidars* are expected to supplement their pay with their caste trade. This they do to a certain extent. If supplementary support is expected from the villagers, an equally shared tax or a fixed rate for services, to be used toward increased salaries, would be fairer than the present system whereby the clever, powerful escape, and the simple pay. But while the villager's income is such a gamble, he will be shy of any form of fixed payment, whether it be the wages of his employees or the payment of taxes. In his present state he wants the freedom of informal and irregular methods which leave him the chance of escape. When he is in better control of the vagaries of Nature, and thus stabilizes his income, it will be easier for him to accept a irregular share of the payment of public servants. In return for more reliable conditions of payment, the agents of authority must be more willing to place the interests of the community before those of their own families.

The officers superior to our village agents must likewise give their cooperation if the standards of service of our local agents are to be raised. To our young Indian friends eager to serve their country, we repeatedly pass on the need as we have observed it—"Take offices of responsibility, and fill them worthily, thinking of others rather than of yourselves. Make no selfish demands of officers below you, demands which will be passed on down the line until they reach the burden bearers—the villagers. Talking will not help. Villagers have listened long enough. They need men who will give them justice, and who will demand honesty from them in return. Only in this way can you inspire in them faith that their own countrymen can carry responsibility honourably—a faith which has been sorely tried by irresponsible agents." A recent, happy experience has shown us what an officer of high standards can do. A young Deputy of our area of the District expected no personal gifts from men below him. Instead, he lived within his salary, and ordered them to do the same. His attitude caused much scrambling at first. Activities which had not been questioned were now censored, and therefore quickly curtailed. He has undertaken a colossal house cleaning. And he is being misunderstood and criticized by upholders of the old régime. But his reward is the growing confidence of the villagers in his area. It has not taken them long to learn that he is honestly trying to mete out justice. And this has lifted one of the big fears from their lives. Our village friends are too occupied with immediate problems to take much interest in affairs of State. Governors and Councils are figures whose activities are remote.

Even the heads of Departments of their own District do not loom large on their horizon. Villagers judge the Government and landlords by the most subordinate representatives—the agents of authority—with whom they have personal contacts in the village world.

CHAPTER IX

"LET ALL THINGS OLD ABIDE"

In times of pleasure and of sorrow, under stress of excitment or of fear, and in quiet noonday and evening talks, our village friends have presented to us the Case for the Village. Certain points have been reiterated until we are almost immune to their force, while others have been touched lightly. There are statements which we have been tempted to smooth out for the sake of our own feelings or those of friends, and points at which apologetics seemed to be called for. But we have tried to set forth the case as the villagers present it, without interfering with their candour. In the process of translation, and for the sake of those who are easily shocked, we have sacrificed some of the zest of village speech, with its rough jokes and picturesque local allusions, but aside from this, we have done our best to follow actual conversations. It is not we, but our village friends who speak.

"To a new-comer we may seem suspicious, obstinate, intolerant, backward—all that goes with refusal to change. We did not choose qualities for ourselves. Experience forced them upon our fathers. And the warnings of our fathers, added to our own experiences, have drilled them into us. Refusal to change is the armour with which we have learned to protect ourselves. If we and our fathers had accepted the new ideas and customs commended to us, we might have made greater progress. But greater progress would have drawn the eyes of a covetous world toward us. And then our lot would have been worse than before. Where are the cities that flourished for a time? In ruins. While they climbed to great heights and fell to the depths of destruction, we kept to the old reliable level. And we have survived. We are not blind to the advantages of the new, but unless we know just where it will lead us, we prefer to let it pass us by.

"At times you cannot hide your impatience with our caution. There was that plough which you urged us to keep. You saw only the advantages which it offered in turning our soil during the months when it has always lain packed and hard. We saw beyond that. We felt the added perspiration of working in the killing sun of June, and saw the risk of exposing our bullocks to the cruelty of heat and sun, especially when they are hardly strong enough for such a plough. And you know how we dread the sickness or loss of an animal. We saw the need of feeding our bullocks more than we need to feed them when they are idle. We knew the weight of the plough, and foresaw the difficulties of carrying it on our shoulders from one small plot to another, far away. And we saw the eyes of rent collectors, greedily watching the results of our added toil. We were sorry to disappoint you, but we could not risk such an expensive and doubtful experiment, when the benefits would most likely not stay with us. The plough that Bala's brother won at your Exhibition last Spring is better. It is light, like our ploughs, and good for ordinary ploughing. But even it is not good for cultivation and seeding, as our old ploughs are. Some of us have borrowed it, and like it. But Bala's brother has not dared to use it. He is so prosperous that he is afraid of anything that makes a show of prosperity. In that, he may seem foolish to you. But we do not blame him for his caution.

"When you insisted upon entering your Bhangi pastor's boy in school, we set up all the defences which our intolerance could supply. All our lives we have watched Bhangis at their defiling work. And no matter how much you clean them up and change their names, they are repulsive to us. We would not think of touching them any more than we would use our left hands in taking food. From the time when our earliest impressions were formed we have despised them. And our revulsion increases with the years. You can let yourself forget the work which they do, and the flesh of swine which they eat. We cannot. Much more important than this is the change which might come from their new way of living and thinking. Bhangis might prove troublesome if not kept Bhangis. They must stay where they have always been, and remain content with the work which is theirs to do. If they want to rise to something better, who then will keep our village clean? Each of us has been born to his appointed task. Perhaps we are what we are because of former lives. We do not know. Everything is in the hands of the gods. But this we do know. The old order has served us well for centuries. It has provided a task for everyone who is born into it. And it has provided for the carrying out of every task needed for village self-sufficiency, by men trained from childhood. If change once begins, how far will it go? What if Bhangis should try to be farmers, and farmers try to be carpenters, and carpenters try to be teachers? There would be confusion and wrangling, and work badly done. No, the old order with its unalterable allotments is much more satisfactory.

"If we can assure ourselves that the better implement or the more generous custom will lead to no harmful consequences to ourselves, we may try to make it ours. We have replaced many of our charms with treatments which you or your doctors have advised. We have made changes in our houses, because we have seen that they are good and that they involve no risks. We are sowing new seed because we have been shown the better crops on the Demonstration Farm. You must be patient with our slowness and caution. An arm that has long been held stiff cannot be bent without effort and complainings. Our sons with their reading and their larger world may insist upon more changes. If so, we pray that they may have means of self-protection to cover their progress. For us who are not wise in the ways of the new world, the old, well measured ways are safest.

"Our walls which conceal all that we treasure, are a

With the beginning of the rains, out comes the old plough

The plough that was too modern

necessary part of our defence. Our forefathers hid themselves from a covetous world behind mud walls. We do the same. Barriers are no longer needed as protection against cruel raiders. But they are needed against those ruthless ones who come to extort. For the old purpose, our fathers built them strong enough to shut out the enemy, and made them of earth so that they might be inconspicuous. For the present purpose they must still shut out the eyes of a greedy enemy and still be inconspicuous. But they are a better protection if instead of being kept strong they are allowed to become dilapidated. Dilapidation makes it harder for the covetous visitor to tell who is actually poor and who simulates poverty. When men become so strong that the agents of authority work with them for their mutual benefit, they dare to expose their prosperity in walls of better materials and workmanship. But if the ordinary man suddenly makes his wall conspicuous, the extortioner is on his trail. You remember what a short time it was after Puri put up his imposing new verandah with a good grass roof, that the police watchman threatened to bring a false charge against him. He paid well for his show of progress. Old walls tell no tales.

"Neither do old clothes. When we are to deal with strangers we suit our dress to the occasion, not to our means. And most occasions call for poor clothes. You have heard them complain in the hospital that they are at a loss to know who should be charity patients and who should pay. We would be foolish to bring upon ourselves big bills, when the simple matter of dress will give us charity rates. The Memsahiba let appearances influence her that first year when she picked out what she thought were the ten poorest amongst our children. She did the choosing so we did not interfere. They had learned the most effective way of appealing to her sympathies, by word and dress. And their reward was a ride in the motor and new clothes from the landlords' wives in Mainpuri. Later she learned how mistaken her choice had been. And the next winter she came much nearer to the poverty line. What a joke we had on the accountant when the new Deputy came on tour! There sits friend Accountant, looking very smart, all ready for the Deputy's arrival. At the last moment someone breaks the news that the new Deputy rebukes well dressed accountants. Tells them they cannot live within their income honestly and have fine clothes. Off comes the new turban, off comes the yellow silk waistcoat. Friend Accountant rushes about and borrows a shirt and loin cloth that look neat but old. In these he bows humbly before the Deputy Sahib. And some of us who were absent during the rapid change, did not at first recognize our grand Accountant in his shabby clothes. The visiting Deputy was properly impressed.

"Some may call our pretence of poverty, deception. Perhaps it is. But there are times when deception, as a means of self-protection is justifiable. When a small mother bird knows that a hawk is overhead watching, does she fly straight to her nest? No, she pretends to go to another spot, and goes to her nest under cover of leafy branches. Nature has taught her to deceive to protect her young. We are no worse than she. There are always hawks hovering about us. We deliberately mislead the inquirer. We would be fools to give accurate figures, when there is a strong probability that they will be used to our disadvantage. In self-protection we have learned to make it almost impossible for anyone to tell who is prospering among us. You may guess, and we may guess. But who is going to tell us if we are right. The few who have store-houses filled with grain to lend, and better bullocks, and oil lanterns, expose their prosperity. The extent of their business makes concealment impossible; and the hawks are afraid to make enemies of them. But the degree of prosperity remains a mystery. The Memsahiba sees the jewelry which our women display on special occasions, and she may thus be able to compare our investments in silver. But some men are weak when it comes to ornaments for their women. And some prefer keeping their silver more carefully preserved than on the persons of their wives. You may know the extent of our fields, and that of our debts, and you will still be uncertain as to our actual assets. Some among us are honestly poor. And the rest of us, excepting the affirmed leaders, have learned to make a show of poverty. A man keeps his treasure carefully hidden and only in an emergency, or more likely on his death bed, does he whisper its whereabouts to his son. He dares not risk sharing the secret with any other. And when he has no son, the contentions begin. You remember how badly some of us behaved when old Jaganath died. We dug up most of his floor, and quarrelled and accused and for almost two years we continued fighting in court. We are not grabbing just for the sake of getting. But we are after that which is ours by right of relationship. We who considered ourselves entitled to Jaganath's wealth, felt that we must keep it in the family. We were simply protecting the particular group to which we belong.

"In all of our self protective activities, each of us is not thinking of his own self. No villager thinks of himself apart from his family. He rises or falls with it. In the cities families are scattering. But we need the strength of the family to support us. We do not trust the outside world and we are suspicious of each other. Our lives are oppressed by many fears. We fear the rent collector, we fear the police watchman, we fear everyone who looks as though he might claim some authority over us, we fear our creditors, we fear our patrons, we fear too much rain, we fear locusts, we fear thieves, we fear the evil spirits which threaten our children and our animals, and we fear the strength of our neighbour. Do you wonder that we unite the strength of brothers and sons? That man is to be pitied who must stand alone against the dangers, seen and unseen, which beset him. Our families are our insurance. When a man falls ill, he knows that his family will care for him and his children until he is able to earn again. And they will be cared for without a word of reproach. If a man dies, his widow and children are sure of the protection of a home. To make sure of meeting the needs of our families in times of stress, we want hidden silver and we want land. These will preserve us from starvation through all trials, including the two greatest calamities—the fall of our patrons and the fall of Government. The village has survived the coming and going of many landlords and many rulers by remaining inconspicuous and providing its own sustenance.

"You and others have told us that with newer methods, we would be spared much labour. Perhaps, but we do not fear work. You have seen us go out to our irrigation wells at dawn and return at dusk, day after day through chilly winter months. You have watched us driving our bullocks slowly round and round over the threshing floors through the sun and wind of scorching April days. During suffocating June weather you have watched us repairing our roofs and our house walls. Then with the coming of the rains you have seen us back in the fields with our ploughs. And you know that those of us who care for the crafts, do not idle when trade is slack, but work long hours in the fields. Only the Bhangis have time to be idle, and that is because there are so many things in which their help is undesirable. We are well acquainted with toil. It has always been with us. But these new ideas of more results from less labour are untried, and confusing. And how do we know but what they will leave some of us without employment.

You must give us time to weigh them, and their consequences.

"You know how little time we spend holidaying. We leave the observances to the women. And if they insist upon attending a temple Fair, one man can take a whole bullock cartload of them, while the rest of us stay behind to work. We do take time off for lawsuits—much more than we desire. But that is because our courts are lax these days. When we had English officials to insist upon hearing cases at the time set, we went and were heard and came home. Now we go, and go, and go again, put off each time by some slight excuse. And each time we go, we and our animals forfeit a day in the fields. And the *mukhtar* (pleader) demands payment for his time which he says we have wasted. We do not see how we have been to blame. But we pay because we think it is wise to pay anyone who knows the way of the courts. If this meant payment for only two or three fruitless times of waiting it would not be bad. But when the trips and the *mukhtar's* bills mount to nine or ten, and we are still waiting for the settlement of our case, we begin to feel burdened. If we want pleasant diversion from our daily grind, we wait until it is too dark to work. You never hear us singing or merry making while daylight lasts. Even our Holi fire waits until evening to be lighted. We work. We must work to feed and clothe our families, and to provide for our children's weddings and for those days of adversity which Fate may send us at any time.

"If we do not provide for ourselves completely, who will? Among those who might be expected to take an interest in us, who is there who demonstrates any desire to help? In the cities they devise ways of exploiting us. We know how to drive bargains when we sell our wheat or our sugar cane. We are at home in the wholesale market. But when we get our money and want to take home some cloth, the shop-keepers get out the pieces which they have been unable to dispose of, and persuade us to buy them at exorbitant prices. We know that they are laughing at us. But we want cloth, and the next shop-keeper will cheat us as badly as the last. Wherever we go in the town, sharp eyes are watching to tempt our precious rupees from us. And there is no one to advise us honestly or to help us escape from fraudulent men. When we go to town to attend the courts, there are men everywhere waiting to take advantage of our ignorance and fear. Our lawyers charge fees which they know are beyond our means to pay. And then if we win a case they think that they deserve an extra large gift. Sometimes there is a sincere helper among them, but we are never sure who is what.

"There are the politicians who come to us and declare themselves champions of the village. They must think us very gullible. Do they suppose that we are blind to the fact that it is only during the days before election that they take a passionate interest in us. How surprised you were when you found the lane before our head-man's verandah crowded with traps and light carts. You were new then. Two motors actually drove into the village before the last election. The voters among us make use of this popularity as far as it goes. Why shouldn't we? It is granted with one hand, while the other waits to get. We might as well get while our other hand waits to give. The results matter little to us. One nominee will ignore us as much as the next. So our votes go to the highest bidder, unless our landlord sends a forceful suggestion that we vote for his particular candidate. That dampens the bidding. But we play up to the pretences to the end, even to the ride in their lorry that they gave last time. They took us straight to the polling place and dropped us there while they rushed off to another suddenly popular village. But they forgot the sweets which they had mentioned, and the ride home. And they have forgotten us ever since. Do the men we helped to elect ever come to help us now between elections? All that we ever see of them are glimpses of grand turbans as they hurry past in their expensive motors.

"And what of the priests who should be our comforters and guides? Those among us who have priestly duties to perform, go through them punctiliously, just as the ceremonies require. And at night our village head sometimes reads aloud from the 'Ramayana.' In religion, as in all things, we have learned to depend on whatever we can provide for ourselves, when free from work. The men who devote their lives to priestly duties visit us, to be sure. But they come with a conch or a bell, the sound of which sends our women folk scuttling to the grain jars. At our doors they stop just long enough to have the donations poured into their bags. And when the bags are full they move on. They tell us that the grain is for the temple on the edge of town, or for one on the Ganges. We do not stop to inquire further. They are priests, and we have always given. Sometimes a priest comes to recite verses. But he only does it in the house where the feast is prepared and his pay is promised; or a wandering priest comes by, and stops with us. We gladly give him food and shelter. But if he possesses great wisdom, he does not share it. How long did our Sadhu stay with us, collecting grain until he had so much he needed a store-house to keep it in. Was it two years or more? His pony grazed in our fields, and his cart and his family lived under Jonak's big tree. His wife could get our women to give her anything because she was proud and scornful, and they were innocent of pride. He used to read to us occasionally from the sacred books. And then how swiftly he moved on when that youth came from Etah and recognized him and the woman who had been pretending to be his wife. Since that experience we have been more wary. But we have been taught to honour our priests.

"What of the missionaries who come sometimes to camp beside the village? They know a great deal and could help us if they chose. But they are bent on teaching us what they want us to know and are so anxious to go on somewhere to talk to someone else that they do not stop to listen to us. We cannot always understand them, and we have found that the pleasantest way is to agree with what they say, and let them go on. The agitators who come occasionally to stir us up against someone, usually the Government, are much the same. They are excited and speak town Hindustani, so that we are not always sure of what they mean. It is best to let them think that they have convinced us, and watch them rush on to some other village. They have no time to stop among us to help.

"And what of the Government of whom the agitators complain? It goes through the form of helping us, without any heart. It sends us officials who try to deal out justice while their servants demand grain and fuel from us behind their backs. How can an official be just when we are not sure what he is after and wall ourselves about with self-protective deceits. He goes away calling us deceitful, where we could be honest if we were not afraid. That new young Deputy who just made the rounds of the area. He is trying to help. We longed to have him stay and hear our difficulties, but by the time he will have come often enough to be our friends he will be transferred, and the man who takes his place may be a grafter. In the interests of our own safety, we are prepared to treat all as self-seekers. And much time is lost before we can make sure that a new man is not.

"What of the schools this Government sends us. They teach our boys the things which help town boys to succeed. There is nothing in them to make better farmers, or to make our boys honour the work of their fathers on the land. It makes them all want to get sitting-down jobs away from home. Look at Prabhu. When he finished the village school, nothing would do but that he go to school in town. He should have stayed at home to work in his fields, where hired helpers were fooling his widowed mother. And what is the profit from his school going? He spends his days idly hoping that some rajah will come along and make him his adviser or priest or something. And he could be prosperous without any rajah if he would only look after the land his father left him. And what of the hospitals the Government has established in the towns. You sometimes complain because we seem to lean on you when we go to a hospital for treatments. If we go with you behind us, we know that we shall be cared for. They will do what you ask without expecting gifts. It is not of the doctors we complain. They give us a careful start. But all those men who stand around, and bandage us up afterwards, or mix up our medicines,—they watch to see how much we are ready to give them before they decide how they will handle us. You cannot know unless you are a villager, how everyone threatens and takes from us. When you go anywhere, or when a sophisticated town man goes anywhere, he demands service and he gets it. We stand dumb and show our fear and they trample on us. And what of all these agents whom the Government has employed to keep us properly recorded, and in order? Every new office means to us just one more person to be feared and ingratiated. Even the postman who may bring us a money order expects a few annas for his service. We have never regarded agents as helpers, and the less we consult them the happier we are.

"There are our landlords, to whom we might look for interest and help, if we dared. But we have learned to dare not. One landlord is a Committee that administers the estate on behalf of a Trust Fund, which is used for various charitable purposes. But the charity evidently limits itself to the city. We see no evidences of it in the men who come to collect rents from us, and who watch for any weakness in our armour of self defence. The other landlord has grown rich from his many villages. But we do not begrudge him his riches, because he proclaims his desire to be just toward his tenants, and makes efforts to enforce justice. He is a kind man. But he is too busy with his many properties to take time for any one village. We have never seen him. All we know about him are the reports which our head-man brings from the big durbars to which he is invited once a year. The villages around us fare much worse than we. We have the rent agents of only two landlords to watch and please, and they have many. When a man rents his plots from eight or nine landlords, his worries are manifold. This we are spared.

"We were very suspicious of you when you first came. We watched warily to see what it was that you were after. Now we let you observe, and we answer your endless questions, because we know that in your heart you mean us no harm. We have had some good laughs over the wrong trails we set you on, and the puzzling you did trying to figure out some of the wrong facts we gave you. We could not resist, when there was someone in reach who was actually more stupid than ourselves. You have been learning since then. But sometimes still, we must confess that you are foolish and rash. You made a great mistake when you sent that Bhangi boy to our school. And you act stupidly over some of our disputes and lawsuits. You insist that Deputies can only pass judgment on evidence presented before them in court, and you say that you can only give evidence of what you have seen with your own eyes. So you will not help us when we have most need of it. The Deputies are friends of yours. And it is hard for us to understand why you refuse to speak to our Deputy on behalf of those of us who are your friends. And we cannot see why you become agitated, and rebuke us when we let you know how much we have spent in gifts to various officers, to try to help our cause. What else is there for us to do? We are sure that our opponents are doing the same, and if we fall short, then what will happen to us? You obstinately refuse to acknowledge the importance of this need. And you cannot serve us well as long as you hold aloof from it, and talk about justice and honesty. When we are sure of justice from others, then we shall be glad to drop the old ways of securing favour. They are a terrible drain on the silver which we have worked so hard to earn. But the change must begin with men more powerful than we. We take our cue from them.

"There is no one outside of our own group whom we dare trust. Everyone who comes to us or to whom we go, thinks of what he can get from us—be it money, or grain, or personal glory. You may call us stubborn and backward and hard. But we have learned bitter lessons, we and our fathers. Those lessons have made us cautious. We know that we cannot make much progress with our limited experience and resources. But again we ask just where would progress lead us? We feel safe behind the barriers of our mud walls and our status quo. And we are uneasy when you or our sons propose a change."

When we understand why our village friends feel as they do, we cannot pass them by with the light comment that it is futile to try to better their condition because they do not want anything better. It is up to those of us who know, to help them realize that something better is possible, and to help them overcome the prejudices and fears which make it difficult for them to achieve better things for themselves. Theirs is the old story of the weak illiterate and superstitious controlled by the strong and self-centered. And just as the situation has been faced and made happier in other such places, so can it be met here. In encouraging the change, we have not the right to approach them in a spirit of benevolence as from superior to inferior. Rather, we should come to them with respect for their persistent courage and their stability in a régime where everyone has tried to unstabilize them. We can hope for little response from them until they find in us, assurance of sympathetic understanding. When their suspicions have been replaced by confidence they will accept our services gladly. In the beginning, they will want us to limit ourselves to meeting those needs which they themselves present to us. And they will be shy of any move to project something from the outside world into their village life. At the first sign of such a projection, their defences may go up. But if our friendship has gone deep enough, and our sincerity is sure enough, the defences will not be so high as to keep them from peering over the top to take a good look at the new.

Just as Education has helped men in like communities from lives of fear to lives of progress, so it can help here. Whoever comes to educate must be willing to listen politely to profuse criticisms of his methods. But when he has adjusted his plans to meet the needs of his particular community, he must arm himself so securely with his own confidence in the value of his underlying principles that he is prepared to withstand the discouragements with which the villagers will overwhelm him. Those who are unwilling to wait for the slower processes of Education, can resort to coercion. But our villagers are adroit in their handling of coercion. They do what they think is required to satisfy the coercer, and forget his institutions when he and his supporters have moved on. It is easy for them to drop that which has been introduced through coercion because in their hearts they have not been convinced of its helpfulness. Above all, he who would serve the village must not be so intent on his own ideas that he loses sight of the villager. If he gets too far ahead of the thinking and adjustment of the villager, he will find himself outside the mud walls while those whom he would serve, linger within.

In fostering the development of a new order, whatever form it may take, we cannot cast off the old as useless. It has served and maintained the village, while more daring methods have risen and failed. The new order cannot afford to overlook the strong ties which bind the different castes together into one village body. When the harvest is plentiful, all prosper together. If the harvest is poor, all suffer together. Each man now recognizes himself and his work as a necessary part of the whole, and thereby feels his share in the responsibility of retaining the unity of the whole. This unity is worth preserving, without the necessity of the fear and suspicion of the outside world which at present sustain it. Then too, there is the insurance provided by the family under the old régime. The new insurance may be in some different form. But unless it is as safe and as available as the old, it will not be acceptable to men who know well the consequences of poor harvests, and worse catastrophes.

In developing the new order, we must be ready to work with the established leaders, if they are willing. They have built up their power through their knowledge of man and their capable use of that knowledge. The ignorance and helplessness of their dependents have tempted them to abuse their power. Most men in like circumstances would be likewise tempted. They have thought of their own advancement and have guarded their power by holding others down. If they can be helped to see that they will be benefited by the progress of the whole group, more than by individual progress, they will be able to retain their influence. But if they persist in using their qualities of leadership to retard the group, after their followers have become less ignorant and helpless, the latter will choose new leaders—not as they do now, covertly and in fear of being drawn back, but in dignity and order. There is at present a personal element relationship between the leader and his dependents which should not be lost through changing times. It is this personal element that lends flexibility to the giving and taking between leader and follower, which is seldom found where everything is rule-bound. The leader knows the circumstances of the follower who is indebted to him, and the follower knows how far he can count on his leader to help. Where the personal relationship and personal interest are not abused, they are much more helpful than the impersonal connections of the machine régime.

The new order to which we look forward involves a change in the spirit rather than in the forms of the old order. Men everywhere, when they are free to think for themselves, express their longing to have something more in their lives than the provision for tomorrow's food. And this something more we want for our village friends in the new order. To secure it, we must educate them away from the old fears. This in itself is a challenge. First there are the fears roused by the city. The city must be educated up to a new respect for the village. The village must no longer be a convenient field of plunder for those who have an excuse for plundering, but a community of brother humans who have suffered much at the hands of unscrupulous city dwellers, and who deserve amends in the form of a sharing of town advantages. To help the villagers overcome their suspicion of the world outside their mud walls, we must help them to extend their thoughts from their present rigid limitations to larger relationships. Just as each man realizes his place in the village group so he can be made to realize his place in the nation, and in the world. Now the farmer works his land to feed his family, with something extra to provide for emergencies. If he can be taught to think of his produce which goes beyond family needs, not simply as being grown to meet his own emergencies, but as his share in feeding the world, he will regard himself as a part of society, and not as someone set apart, left out. He and the outside world will be sharing, not watching one another with suspicion. And he will feel the dignity of his essential share.

In the new order men must be freed from their fear of creditors, by having available a fair means of credit. This may come through credit societies, or some other form of organization of which we do not yet know, and which they will work out themselves to meet their own needs. It will release them from the necessity of selling their produce at a loss to satisfy threatening creditors. They will be their own creditors. We must help them, too, to overcome their fear of the motives of their neighbours. Without this fear they will be ready to share in the purchase of implements. At present the more efficient farm machinery is withheld from them because it is beyond the reach of the individual villager. Cooperative buying will make it available. In the same way, trust of and consideration for neighbours will make possible the consolidation of holdings now scattered. It will bring about the collective selling which will be so much fairer to our villagers than the present individual bargaining. And it will draw them together in community efforts to improve the village in education, in sanitation and baby health, in recreation and culture, and in all those things which are now regarded as prerogatives of the city. If men find it no longer necessary to mistrust their neighbours, they will be less insistent upon the confinement of their wives and daughters-in-law. The women will no longer be bound to their family courtyards and cowl-like head scarves. As now they share in the labour and the fears of their own men folk, they will then share in the privileges of the new village.

As each old fear is faced and overcome, our village friends will stand forth, their own masters. They will be free to choose what is best for themselves, from the old order and from the new. No man will be bound irrevocably to another. And no man will be bound to a certain trade from birth; nor will it be said of any man, "Unclean." There must be leaders, and there must be trades, and there will be unclean work. But the leaders will be chosen, perhaps from among those who are born sons of leaders, or perhaps from among those of more humble birth, according to their worth, and their willingness to serve the community. The trades will be in the keeping of men who carry them on from choice and not from compulsion. And the unclean work will be arranged for in such a way that no one group will be labelled by it from birth to death. With all this, there will be a willingness among those who follow to share responsibility, in contrast to their present tendency to lean upon patrons. And the leaders and agents of authority will accept their responsibility for the group as a whole, instead of limiting it to their own families and those whom they have kept dependent upon themselves.

If the new order were to walk into our village tomorrow, we wonder if we would recognize our old friends in their new life. The younger generation would delight in it. But the older men, and the women would be lost. There would be much creaking of the old, stiff joints of custom, and much quaking because the protection of the old cautions was gone. And there would be lamenting for the comfortable assurance of the old dictates which spared one the burden of making decisions and facing the consequences. When we try to picture it all, we realize the folly of trying to put new wine into old bottles. The new order cannot walk in. It must be brought in gradually, sympathetically, as villagers are educated to accept each new phase. We know village folk well enough to believe that if it is presented to them in this way, and if they have a share in bringing it about, they will welcome the new order, eventually. In the beginning they limit their welcome to the services which they want and which we have to offer. And they rise up if our service shows signs of introducing change. This is the point at which tact and psychology, and sympathy, perseverance and resourcefulness, and all the qualities we can muster, must begin to function. Surely no one with a desire to combine education and community service, could want a task more challenging. It would be easier to forget the village and turn to more accessible fields, where there are more congenial spirits. But can we who have been permitted to know the needs of the men and women, the youth and babies, and the animals of the village, "pass by on the other side," and forget.

GLOSSARY

Pronunciation

Ahir—A man of the cow-herd caste.

Arhar—A species of pulse—*cytisus cajan.*

Baithak—A sitting place outside a house, where men gather, fodder is cut, and visitors are entertained.

Bhagat—An exorcist, and a devotee of some goddess.

Bhajan—A hymn.

Bhangi—A man of the sweeper caste.

Brahman—A man of the highest of the four main caste divisions among the Hindus.

Brahmani Bull—A bull released for the benefit of all, as an act of religious merits.

Chamar—A man of the leather-working caste.

Chaprasi—A messenger.

Chaukidar—A watchman.

Chilam—The part of a hubble-bubble which contains the tobacco and fire.

Dhanuk—A man of a low serving caste—an outcaste.

Dhanukin—A woman of the Dhanuk caste.

Dhobi—A man of the washerman caste.

Dholak—A small barrel-shaped drum which is struck sharply and rhythmically with the fingers at one end and the palm of the hand at the other.

Fakir—A man of a begging caste.

Feast of Lights—Illumination by numerous small mustard oil lights on the last day of the dark fortnight in the Hindu month mid October to mid November.

Ganges—One of the Hindu sacred rivers located in North India.

Ghi—Clarified butter.

Gur - Sugar

Hakim—A doctor, not necessarily trained.

Hindi—A language spoken in Northern India largely by Hindus.

Hindustani—A dialect combining Hindi and Urdu.

Holi—The spring festival held at the full moon of the Hindu month mid February to mid March.

Kabbadi—A name of a boy's game.

Kachhi—A man of the vegetable gardening caste.

Kachhin—A woman of the Kachhi caste.

Kahar—A man of the caste that serves as water carriers and the bearers of palanquins.

Kaharin—A woman of the Kahar caste.

Karua Chaut—the fourth of the dark half of the Hindu month mid October mid November when women fast in honour of Ganesha till the moon rises, with the object of bringing prosperity on their husbands and sons.

Kshatriya—The second main caste division of the Hindus.

Lathi—A long stick or club.

Memsahiba—A term of respect given in Northern India to ladies of rank and European ladies.

Maulvi—A learned man in Persian and Arabic.

Mukhtar—An attorney practising in Magistrate's courts.

Nautch—A kind of ballet-dance performed by professional dancers.

Nazarana—A fee or present given by tenants when visited by a landlord or some other superior person.

Neem—The tree *Azadarichta indica.*

Panchayat—A body of arbitrators—usually five—assembled for the purpose of settling petty disputes among the people.

Patwari—A village accountant.

Persian Wheel—A large wheel for raising water, fixed vertically with a number of buckets at its circumference.

Pundit—A person who is learned in the sacred books of the Hindus.

Purdah

PURDAHNASHIN—A woman that sits behind the screen and does not appear in public.

RAMA—One of the most celebrated incarnations of the Hindu deity Vishnu.

RAMAYANA—Name of the great epic poem, recording the exploits of Rama.

RAWAN—The giant who carried off Sita.

SADHU—A religious person; a Hindu ascetic.

SAHIB—A term of respect given in Northern India to gentlemen of rank and Europeans.

SANSKRIT—The ancient literary language of India.

SARDA BILL—Act No. 19 of 1929 passed by the Indian Legislature to prevent marriages of males under eighteen years of age and females under fourteen years of age.

SETTLEMENT OFFICER—A Government officer who checks land records, examines the fertility of land held by land holders and fixes the annual rents. Settlements are usually made after every thirty years.

SHIVA—Name of the third God of the Hindu triad.

SITA—The wife of Rama.

SUDRA—The lowest of the main caste divisions of the Hindus.

SWARAJIST—A member of the Home-Rule party.

TAHSILDAR—A sub-collector of revenue in charge of one of the chief divisions of a District.

TWICE-BORN—The name used when Brahmans have been invested with the sacred thread.

URDU—The language based on Persian and Arabic used by Mohammedans throughout India.

VAISYA—The third main caste division of the Hindus.

WAJIB-UL-ARZ—The customs of a village which are recorded and recognized legally.

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